

'Volo non Valeo quia Nequeo quod Desidero'. Antithetic aristocrat: George Howard, Ninth Earl of Carlisle (1843-1911), artist and patron.

Thesis submitted by Katharine Haslam to the Department of Fine Art, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The current thesis is concerned with the artistic life of George Howard, and with his role as patron-participant. Howard was born in 1843, eventual heir to the earldom of Carlisle and the vast estates pertaining to Castle Howard in Yorkshire and Naworth Castle near Brampton in Cumberland. He sought to live the life of an artist, eschewing, to a greater or lesser degree, both political and ancestral responsibilities. On his accession to the title Ninth Earl of Carlisle in 1889 he agreed, at his wife's request, to place the lion's share of the management of the family estates in her hands; by this date Rosalind Howard had already proved herself a highly competent and rigorous administrator.

Having overcome familial opposition to his desire to become an artist, Howard faced a lifelong struggle for self-determination. Howard's intentions were epitomised by the studio-house which he commissioned Philip Webb to design during the early years of his London life in 1868. This marked the beginning of a lifelong relationship and, literally, cemented his place at the heart of the former Oxford Set. However, his vacillating self-belief, his wife's misplaced political ambitions on his behalf, and a social climate which distinguished amateur artist from professional more usually on an economic basis rather than by merit, combined to place him in an anomalous position. The artistic road along which Howard doggedly travelled was a circuitous one, punctuated by crises of confidence succeeded by renewed endeavour and altered direction. It took him through Pre-Raphaelitism under the tutelage of Burne-Jones, to French realism under Alphonse Legros, and beyond. He finally opted to follow the teachings of Giovanni Costa, whom he visited in Italy on an almost annual basis from 1866. Howard, with a small band of Costa's acolytes from England, America and Italy, comprised the Etruscan School. Members' work aimed at the expression of landscape's latent sentiment, characterised by a panoramic format. Italian subjects predominated in Howard's work for many years, being augmented by those depicting India, Egypt and other countries to which he travelled later in his career.

Throughout his life Howard remained unimpressed by social distinctions, and his role as patron to Legros, Costa, Webb and many other fellow artists whose economic wellbeing he underpinned, is inseparable from his friendship with them. Particularly noteworthy is his role as facilitator which, in several instances, resulted in some of the principal works

associated with those concerned.

Howard was widely acknowledged by his contemporaries as being an influential figure in cultural matters. He stood for Parliament three times, with varying degrees of unwillingness, and was returned as Liberal MP for East Cumberland twice. He was a Trustee of the National Gallery for thirty years and expended much energy working with galleries and museums both in Britain and abroad, as well as other reform- and education-based bodies such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry.

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Abbreviations

Archit. J. : Architects' Journal

Archit. Rev. : Architectural Review

Art J. : Art Journal

Mag. Art : Magazine of Art

Introduction

Consult any biographical work concerning Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Morris, even Whistler - in short, almost any figure of significance related to progressive art movements or design reform during the latter half of the nineteenth century - and there is George Howard, appearing more or less briefly in the role of friend, patron, artist or activist. In a cross-section of those publications succeeding the resurgence of interest in the Pre-Raphaelites and related movements, which accelerated during the 1970s, Howard has been variously described as 'an amateur painter of some quality',¹ 'a dedicated amateur'² and 'friend and patron' to Burne-Jones.³ It would appear logical to surmise that here was a well-connected and enthusiastic amateur hovering on the sidelines of London's avant-garde. Nothing could be further from the truth. The answer as to why Howard appears to have been so consistently pigeon-holed lies chiefly in two directions. Firstly, in the enduring ambiguity dogging any evaluation of his status due to the apparently mutually exclusive duality of the terms 'professional' and 'aristocrat'. Secondly, it lies in the conflicting tenets to which Howard was exposed during the formative years of his training as an artist, and the prolonged and circuitous route that he embarked upon in searching for a mode of expression with which he could be at ease. It could be argued that Howard gained initial access to the mentors under whom he studied from the mid-1860s precisely because of his elevated social status. However, their influences were so diverse in nature that the unearthing of his artistic 'voice' was delayed for far longer than may have been the case had he been confined to the strictures of a more conventional training. Howard passed from initial efforts at self-instruction derived from the study of Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing* to that provided at South Kensington and Heatherley's, and thence to the tutelage of Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898). Burne-Jones was succeeded by Alphonse Legros (1837-1911), and Giovanni

¹ McCarthy, *William Morris*, p.337

² Denney, *Grosvenor Gallery*, p.6

³ Waters, *A Quest for Love* (Exh., London), 1993, p.21. Caroline Dakers has redressed the balance somewhat by devoting a chapter to Webb, Howard and 1 Palace Green in *The Holland Park Circle*. In it, she acknowledges Howard's determination to gain acceptance as a professional artist.

Costa (1826-1903) thereafter. Howard's ultimate adoption of Costa's schematised interpretation of landscape, inspired by his intimacy with the Italian *campagna*, occurred largely as the result of a loss of direction and confidence and a retreat from Legros' interventive methods rather than as an intellectually defined progression. Howard was a founder member of the Etruscan School, a band of painters who sought to harness virtuosity rather than indulge it, at a time when the climate of the day was set to fete flamboyance following the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. An emergent cult of personality breathed fresh life from the Grosvenor, which became synonymous with Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Movement. Burne-Jones' large and lovely enigmas, Whistler's conceptual nocturnes and Watts' huge Symbolist canvases bespoke visionary subjection to the sensibilities of an audience charmed by the ascendancy of artist as arbiter. Members of the Etruscan School exhibited there from the gallery's inaugural exhibition and for the succeeding ten years. The depiction of nature as advocated by Ruskin was at odds with Costa's ethos, although empathy with one's environs was essential to both, with a thorough knowledge of natural form acting as a mainstay. Costa sought to encourage its interpretation not through the replication of observed reality, but rather by the expression of its latent sentiment. Thus the Etruscan painters favoured the sublimation of the landscape features characteristic of a given location or region, and the decorative elements of landscape were emphasised by the production of often somewhat abstracted compositions.

Burne-Jones, Legros and Costa, who between them shaped Howard's development, possessed such disparate visions that, given his predisposition to eclecticism, his consequent loss of direction and recurrent crises of confidence have a ring of inevitability about them. The other-worldly vision of Burne-Jones, so firmly studio-based, had little in common with the debt owed by Legros to realists such as Courbet. In turn, Legros' work was dominated by subjects with religious overtones or those depicting the French peasantry and itinerants, embattled by the destructive forces of a hostile Nature, which was itself at odds with Costa's promulgation of the harmonious and cathartic potential of man's communion with his landscape. Howard possessed neither the melancholy introspection of Burne-Jones, nor was he able to assimilate that

sombre tenor and 'severe dignity'⁴ characteristic of Legros, which was so alien to his own nature. In Costa, Howard was to find a mentor with whom he could share his love of landscape, and who had fashioned a timely framework within which he could work which accorded well with Howard's essential lightness of vision; he had no desire to express, as did Burne-Jones, his inner life through painting. Such intensity of introspection dismayed him; instead, he responded to nature's stimuli and proffered a response to the actual rather than the visionary. His granddaughter, Winifred Nicholson, wrote of him that:

The visions of his day did not...wrestle with nightmare and paradise in the world of the unconscious. They went to olive groves and walked beside the sunlit sea...and set down carefully the blue distances in the Carrara hills.⁵

Being prone to periodic bouts of depression, Howard was often to turn to painting as a cathartic refuge. Winifred Nicholson summarised it quite simply thus: 'Painting made him happy...expressing delight in the things he saw'.⁶ Howard's alignment with Costa, his final and most formative influence, restored his confidence following a prolonged period of self-doubt which occurred during the late 1860s and early 1870s when he had temporarily associated himself with the so-called Poetry without Grammar group headed by Robert Bateman (1842-1922), loosely-grouped young artists united in their admiration of Burne-Jones. Howard's privileged position as Burne-Jones' intimate friend and former pupil must have earned him a certain validation in their eyes. He, along with several other members of the group such as Alfred Sacheverell Coke (fl 1869-1892) and E.R. Hughes (1849-1914), executed illustrations for the *People's Magazine*. This was one of the many monthly journals that sprang into existence hot on the heels of the instantly and resoundingly successful *Once a Week*, which was first published in 1859. Some years later, Howard also executed illustrations for *Carlyle's Early Life* by J.A. Froude and the *English Illustrated Magazine*.

Hindsight has done little to clarify the ambiguity of Howard's position as a member of

⁴ James, *Development of Modern Landscape*, p.48

⁶ Nicholson, *George Howard* (Exh., London), 1954, foreword (unpaginated)

⁶ Ibid.

the Victorian nobility harbouring sincere artistic ambitions. By the 1860s Sara Prinsep's salon at Little Holland House had begun, as Caroline Dakers asserts, to make 'bohemia respectable':

...[she] introduced into her new home a cosmopolitan and liberal spirit to which people of that date were unaccustomed...At a time when, it cannot again be too strongly emphasised...an artist and a gentleman were terms held to be antipodean...⁷

Yet although the social standing of artists was to continue in the ascendant during the coming years, when Howard first made his appearance amidst the circle frequenting Little Holland House, the aristocratic 'professional' remained an anachronism. Artists of the period were classified as either professional or amateur - they either earned a living (or, on occasion, supplemented it) by pecuniary gain from sales of their work, or they did not. Too few artists had fallen between these two stools to have prompted a refinement of the delineation in which merit and economics were not inextricable, and of which intent, too, would be an informing factor. Howard had few contemporaries with whom there existed a comparable parallel of circumstance: Princess Louise (1848-1939), the sculptress daughter of Queen Victoria, whom he studied alongside at the National Art Training School at South Kensington, and Hercules Brabazon Brabazon (1821-1906),⁸ are perhaps two. Princess Louise was married to Howard's cousin, the Marquess of Lorne; they had an apartment at Kensington Palace (where in 1878 she had a studio built in the grounds) near to Howard's townhouse at Palace Green, and she and Howard remained in frequent contact. There was a significant overlap between their social circles, including, amongst others, William Blake Richmond (1842-1921) and Sir Edgar Boehm (1834-1890). She, like they, exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery. However, Princess Louise had the misfortune to be both female and a member of the royal family, and was therefore immovably trapped within the strictures of society's narrowest and least forgiving echelon, powerless to dissociate herself from it. Hercules Brabazon

⁷ Stirling, *A Painter of Dreams*, quoted in Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle*, p.24

⁸ Brabazon was a landscape and still-life watercolourist. Born in Paris, he was educated at Harrow and Trinity College Cambridge, where he read Mathematics. He studied in Rome for three years, and took lessons from J.H. d'Egville and A.D. Fripp. He travelled with Ruskin and Arthur Severn, and later toured Spain, Egypt and India. He was one of the original members of the New English Art Club.

Brabazon, in contrast to Howard, took pride in his amateur status, only being persuaded by Sargent in 1892 to allow an exhibition of his work at the Goupil Gallery, and distributing the proceeds from the paintings sold. Howard's stance was entirely different to Brabazon's. His somewhat erratic exhibiting record, unlike that of Brabazon, can be largely attributed to recurrent crises of confidence rather than a reluctance to be aligned with a creative profession. Indeed, he welcomed the opportunity of being perceived as industrious. From the very outset of Howard's life in London in 1864 he made every tangible statement of intent possible: he enrolled at the National Art Training School at South Kensington and at Heatherley's art school, embarking on an intense period of study in order to gain entry to the Royal Academy Schools. Following his failure to do so, he tacitly advertised his occupation by the conspicuous incorporation of a studio window at the front of his new townhouse at Palace Green in Kensington, an environment which over the preceding few years had begun to assume a markedly artistic identity. Howard, like many in his circle, also adopted a slightly wayward dress code: just as William Morris was synonymous with indigo smocks, so Howard was inseparable from his loosely-tied cravat and scarlet tam o' shanter. It was a kind of self-branding, a further element in the 'packaging' of an artist, and marked him out as unorthodox. In this, as in so many other ways, Howard attempted self-deliberation.

Unquestionably, then, Howard sought to establish himself as a professional artist. It was a distant remove from the optional, untaxing and affectionately-regarded occupation which early definitions of the term 'amateur' delineate. Howard's anomalous standing makes it essential that the semantic intricacies of the term 'amateur' be considered, and that the distinctions between the varying interpretative subtleties of the term as it was utilised during the nineteenth century, and as it has evolved since, be borne in mind. As Greg Smith writes:

'...it was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as the commodification of culture reached new levels of sophistication, that the term [amateur] acquired its modern sense as an antonym of *professional*. The word developed its pejorative sense at the same time, as arguments raged about whether the absence of commercial pressures gave the amateur an advantage, or whether the lack of the market as a stimulant always condemned him or her to mediocrity.'

⁹ Fenwick & Smith, *The Business of Watercolour*, pp.19-20

Smith goes on to note that:

...the word *hobby*, which also originated in the early nineteenth century, has increasingly been applied to amateur art. Defined as a favourite occupation undertaken solely for amusement, it has defused some of the negative associations of amateur art practice by implicitly making more modest claims. The term has also sanctioned a certain degree of participation in the market... ¹⁰

Indeed, Howard was exhibiting and selling paintings almost thirty years before Huish remarked in 1892 that:

...an amateur now considers it no degradation to compete with his professional brethren for the sale of his pictures. ¹¹

This, when coupled with his noble birth, serves only to further emphasise the rarity of Howard's position. Is the fact that he could never claim to have earned a living from his work sufficient justification, therefore, for labelling him an amateur, packed as the term is with depreciatory overtones? Should one not rather ask: had it been an economic necessity that he should do so, was his talent sufficient to have sustained him? This was a question that Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford had asked herself, characterising her work as that of one 'who would have been an artist had it been her fate to earn her bread'.¹² Howard certainly perceived the anomalous nature of his position in relation to fellow-artists whose livings were dependant upon the sale of their work. However, he inadvertantly undermined his own claims to professional recognition by assuming responsibility for supporting and promoting other artists in his own stead. He assisted other aspiring artists, intervening whenever possible to effect introductions or commissions. Likewise, as a young artist with sufficient income to finance private tuition, Howard swiftly became essential to the economic wellbeing of his tutor

¹⁰ Ibid. p.19

¹¹ Huish (*Nineteenth Century*, 32 (1892), p.720), quoted by Fenwick & Smith in *The Business of Watercolour*, p.19

¹² Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World*, p.168. It is also interesting to note that in Florence Fenwick-Miller's opinion, Lady Waterford's talents had been 'overlaid and smothered by her social position'. Ibid.

Alphonse Legros.¹³ During the years of Legros' financial difficulties Howard paid towards the hire of his models, promoted the sale of his paintings and purchased numerous works himself, amassing one of the most extensive and comprehensive collections of Legros' work.

Throughout his life Howard disregarded social distinctions, and the disparate nature of his associates add in no small part to confounding a resolution of the enigma of his position. From Philip Webb, the Socialist architect who revelled in a blatant disregard for the privileges bestowed by status, to Sir Coutts Lindsay, the flamboyant dilettante driven to define himself as aesthetic guru to the artistically-minded by opening with great *eclat* the Grosvenor Gallery, that 'cave of Adullam'¹⁴ for artists either unwilling or unable to exhibit at the Royal Academy. In 1877, when the Grosvenor Gallery opened, Howard had already known Lindsay for several years, and had been privy to the discussions during which the idea for the gallery had germinated. Lindsay courted Society's elite prior to the gallery's opening, envisaging that the conglomeration of a receptive coterie of aristocratic and wealthy aesthetes would stimulate patronage by the open-handed socially ambitious. It was inevitable that Howard would be invited to exhibit at the inaugural exhibition. It is less easy to propose with any certainty a hypothesis as to why. Quite apart from his claims as an artist (and it is not known how Coutts Lindsay evaluated his talents), Howard had been involved with the project from its inception. He was also on intimate terms with one of the gallery's prospective ascendant stars, Edward Burne-Jones. In addition, he provided a vital link between British and Italian art movements in the persona of Giovanni Costa, a future stalwart of the Grosvenor. Lindsay was keen to provide a pan-European forum at the new gallery, and Costa's inclusion in the inaugural exhibition was entirely due to Howard, who lent one of Costa's principal works from his own collection. Thus neither sycophancy nor expediency can be ruled out as having played a part in Coutts Lindsay's invitation to

¹³ Legros found himself in straitened circumstances during the mid-1860s following the collapse of Overand & Gurney's Bank. His position was exacerbated by his ostracism from the erstwhile profitable patronage of the Ionides family following the breakdown of his relationship with James McNeill Whistler. This will be examined in due course.

¹⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. Crane to Howard, February 27th 1876

Howard to select several examples of his work to hang in the first Grosvenor Gallery exhibition.

Works by Howard have been included in several exhibitions in recent years, each of which has recounted the same salient facts: that his artistic nature was inherited from his mother, Mary Parke, who was an able watercolourist tutored by de Wint; that he was taught by Burne-Jones, Legros and Costa, and that he was a founder member of the Etruscan School. However, there has been a tendency, perhaps arising in part from the sheer brevity with which Howard is often dealt, to adhere to broad generalities. A contradictory composite image has resulted, the true direction of his development being obscured by conflicting chronologies of the formative years of his training. The present study will establish a reliable chronology and set new parameters within which Howard may be examined. In order to do so, particularly in cases where previous paraphrase has been cited inaccurately, passages from primary sources have been quoted at length. Passages from primary sources previously uncited elsewhere have also been quoted in full. The current locations of paintings by Howard are stated where known. However, omissions will be noted in the text, which arise from the fact that the former owners of a number of works have died since they were last exhibited in the 1950s and 1970s, and several key private collections have since been dispersed. Consequently, the whereabouts of many of these paintings are currently unknown.

As has already been noted, Howard often appears only as a tangential figure in more recent studies of his closest associates. Significantly, however, when alluded to in the published memoirs of his contemporaries,¹⁵ his habitual presence as an intimate placed at the nucleus of the circle is taken for granted, and perhaps for this very reason seldom expanded upon. Alice Comyns Carr numbered Howard amongst the few 'intimate friends' received at The Grange 'Sunday after Sunday' along with Morris, Ruskin and Marie Stillman.¹⁶ It is significant that Howard's informal pencil portrait sketches should

¹⁵ such as Alice Comyns Carr's *Reminiscences*, Georgiana Burne-Jones's *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* or Agresti's *The Life and Work of Giovanni Costa*

¹⁶ Adam (ed.), *Mrs J Comyns Carr's Reminiscences*, p.64. Although Alice Comyns Carr is perhaps not the most reliable biographer, Rosalind Howard's journals serve to confirm that Howard was indeed a frequent weekend visitor at The Grange.

be numbered amongst his most frequently-exhibited works, tacitly underlining his claims as an 'insider', whilst accentuating the more usual omission to evaluate his finished paintings. Similar manifestations of disregard are evident in reference to Howard's role as patron. The work he commissioned from the architect Philip Webb has been examined in several instances, amongst them *Philip Webb in the North*¹⁷ and *Webb at Brampton*,¹⁸ which casts Howard in the role of enthused amateur artist indulging a fancy for Webb's idiosyncratic brand of architecture. However, the centrality of his role as advocate and apologist throughout the ill-starred planning and building process of St Martin's parish church in Brampton, Cumbria¹⁹ is overlooked. In my examination of Howard's architectural, decorative and pictorial commissions, this is a balance which I have sought to redress by the minute tracking of two cross-disciplinary commissions: that of 1 Palace Green in Kensington and the redesign of the library at Naworth Castle, the ancient Howard family seat near Brampton.

Howard's significance as a patron to Morris, Burne-Jones and Webb is encapsulated by 1 Palace Green, the Kensington townhouse commissioned from Philip Webb in 1867. It was Webb's second design for a domestic residence in London, but was of a more ambitious nature than the studio house built for Valentine Prinsep the preceding year.

¹⁷ Curry, R and Kirk, S, *Philip Webb in the North* (Exh., Middlesborough), 1984

¹⁸ McEvoy (*Archit, J.*, 190 (1989), pp. 40-63)

¹⁹ It was decided in 1874 that a new church should replace Brampton's old parish church, which had fallen into disrepair. The Brampton Building Committee raised funds by private subscription. By far the greater proportion of the monies pledged came from the Howard family, with George Howard himself pledging £316 and being actively involved in the fundraising. As a condition of his donation, Howard had reserved the right to appoint an architect of his choice for the design of the new building. Predictably, he proposed Webb. From the outset, however, there was a general lack of enthusiasm in the town for the project. It was perceived by some that a tramway would be of more benefit than an upgraded church, and there was resentment from other quarters at the undemocratic means by which the architect had gained the commission. Webb's design, which owed much to domestic architecture, bemused the Building Committee and gave rise to protracted objections. Building began in 1877, and Webb continued to receive suggestions for alterations over the succeeding months. St Martin's church was completed in 1878 without its tower, funds for the building of which had been withdrawn by the Committee. Many years later, in 1902, Webb recalled the church's reception by the local populace: 'I...left it to the clumsy carelessness of somewhat unliftable citizens of a really mean country town...when I handed the work over to them...they were by no means anxious to express any pleasure in the result of my work.' (Philip Webb to William Weir, 1902. Quoted in Swenarton, *Artists & Architects: The Ruskinian Tradition in Architectural Thought*, p.46). So deeply did the experience affect him that Webb refused ever again to work with another building committee.

This had relied for inspiration upon the red brick parsonage style, cohesively gothic, which had first been seen at Red House. Palace Green, which was to be erected on Crown land, incorporated references to a number of disparate architectural styles. Webb's revelatory use of brickwork confounded the Commissioners for Woods and Forests, who were required to approve the design before the house was built, and a battle for planning permission ensued which lasted as long as the building process itself. That the house was erected in as uncompromised a form as possible was due to the dogged alliance between Webb and Howard, forged in the face of opposition from the likes of such influential figures as Sir Anthony Salvin, Sir Digby Wyatt and the Crown architect, Sir Charles Gore. Once the house was complete, in 1872, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company, or the Firm, as it was more familiarly known, supplied a large volume of furnishings, and Morris advised the Howards on decorative schemes. Whilst externally the focus of the house lay in its prominent studio gable, internally it lay in the dining room frieze, designed by Burne-Jones and executed partially by himself and his studio assistants, and subsequently by Walter Crane. Additional decorations to the woodwork of the room were designed and executed by Morris. The Cupid and Psyche frieze has given rise to several articles,²⁰ but a second room in the house, though of less pretension, could be said to epitomise in microcosm the ethic at work throughout the decoration of Palace Green. This was the boudoir, an adjunct to the drawing room. This small space was redecorated as a backdrop to Burne-Jones' *Annunciation*, purchased by Howard in 1879, and was a gem of harmonious detail and hue. Correspondence relating to the planning process at Palace Green, as well as that concerning both the Cupid and Psyche frieze and the boudoir, has been quoted at length. Further details of the decorative schemes at Palace Green are given in Appendix 5, their reconstruction being largely based on Rosalind Howard's account books and a recently identified inventory of furniture and effects undertaken by her (Private Collection).

Although it would be inappropriate to overstate Howard's significance as a patron when there were those who commissioned on a far more impressive scale, it is noteworthy that

²⁰ Colvin, 'The Pictures at Palace Green' in *Magazine of Art*, VII (1884), pp.83-88; 'The Cupid and Psyche Frieze by Sir Edward Burne-Jones at Number 1 Palace Green' in *The Studio*, 67 (1898), pp.3-13 and Waters, 'Painter and Patron: The Palace Green Murals' in *Apollo*, CII, 1975, pp.338-341.

in his discreet way he was a perennial source of encouragement and promotion for his associates in their endeavours. Ever-supportive of Morris's forays into the experimental, Howard purchased the first examples of hand-knotted rugs produced at Hammersmith, and placed an order for a large carpet before carpet-weaving was even advertised in the Firm's prospectus. This required a substantial financial commitment against an unguaranteed outcome. Howard facilitated Burne-Jones' *magnum opus*, *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, and battled long and hard to bring to fruition St Martin's parish church at Brampton, Webb's sole ecclesiastical design to reach completion. Howard's later years were increasingly given over to official duties in the domain of art administration, education and reform, although he continued to paint and exhibit with undiminished enthusiasm. Howard was a Trustee of the National Gallery for thirty years, acting as President of the Trustees for several of them. He also sat on the committees of both the Chantrey Bequest and the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry. He maintained close contact with both British and international bodies concerned with art in education and architectural preservation. Howard was widely acknowledged by his contemporaries as being an influential figure in cultural matters; indeed, when he was first returned to Parliament in 1879, the tenor of the coming years was anticipated when Webb wrote to him:

I think it will be a good thing for the country to have in the House a member who knows something of the arts, and from personal experience understands the technicalities of Art... ²¹

Howard possessed no political ambitions, however, and is likely to have agreed to stand for election at the behest of his wife. Walter Crane, with whom Howard maintained a friendship throughout his life, wrote in acknowledgment of the conflict he now faced. The enduring primacy of his painting is evident:

I am glad that you can manage to get on with your work in [the] studio as well as in the House. They ought to fit up a studio for you there. ²²

The construction of a narrative framework within which to incorporate any interpretation

²¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. April 22nd 1879

²² Castle Howard Archive, J22/30. March 5th 1880

of Howard's artistic development and his role as patron-participant, is principally reliant upon primary source material held in the family archive at Castle Howard in Yorkshire. In particular, Howard's own cursory and episodic diary kept intermittently between 1860 and 1863,²³ those sketchbooks which he occasionally supplemented with textual material,²⁴ and Rosalind Howard's journals, which provide an invaluable record of Howard's daily activities following their marriage in 1864, are invaluable.²⁵ Inevitably, these sources are of a disadvantageously subjective nature. However, additional primary material with which to provide either counterbalance or further insight is limited. The researcher is hampered still further by the paucity of surviving correspondence between Howard and virtually anyone except his wife; consequently, his is all too often an inferred voice. Secondary sources relate almost exclusively to Howard's mature 'Etruscan' style, whilst any critical evaluation of his work is conspicuously absent from contemporary reviews. Thus the documents at Castle Howard remain, despite their obvious limitations, the principal foundation upon which to construct an initial critique of Howard's *oeuvre*. The scope of the present thesis is consequently set within parameters dictated largely by the imbalance of evidential sources, resulting in what is, at times, a narrative of uneven emphasis. This is not, however, wholly disadvantageous, as the three key sources referred to above allow particular emphasis to be laid on the early years of Howard's artistic development, facilitating the formulation of a chronology hitherto uncompiled, and the clarification of recurrent anomalies concerning his pre-Etruscan career.

The lack of extant evidence in which Howard's autonomous voice is expressed is compounded still further by his self-effacing nature, giving rise to something of an elusive figure for the researcher. It could almost be said that he colluded in writing himself out of posterity. The end of the nineteenth century and opening years of the twentieth were an age of memoirs, but Howard sought to circumvent its legacy. When in 1910 May Morris wrote asking him for any recollections or anecdotes he might have

²³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112

²⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113

²⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J23/109/9-30

had relating to her father, his response was evasive:

I am afraid that I can be of no use. I looked through the...letters that I have & I do not think that there was anything that could be of any service. Neither do I feel able to record stories. Funny little incidents, which it is a pleasure to remember and which are enjoyed by real friends would, it seems to me, give a false impression to a public that did not know him personally or know his charm at first hand. ²⁶

This despite the abundance of correspondence from Morris and his closest associates in Howard's possession. In response to a similar request, Eirikr Magnusson replied at length, concluding:

I have only one object in view: to do my duty to an unforgettable friend. Do not hesitate to enquire further if I have failed to be explicit enough. ²⁷

The contrast is self-evident.

Howard, by nature self-deprecating and with a deeply-rooted frailty of confidence, has long been overshadowed by his wife Rosalind, who has been referred to by Fiona McCarthy as being 'even more remarkable'²⁸ than he. Due to her zealous involvement with both the suffrage and temperance movements, as well as her single-minded management of the Howard estates for over thirty years, Rosalind Howard's impression on history has so far proved of a more indelible nature than that of her husband. Two biographical works have been devoted to her: the first, *Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle*, by her daughter Dorothy Henley, and a second, *The Radical Countess*, by her son-in-law Charles Roberts. The latter publication was written as a ripost to the former, Roberts having judged that Henley had cast her mother in an undeservedly poor light. A third publication, Virginia Surtees' *The Artist and the Autocrat*, is a work of biography concerned with the lives of both George and Rosalind Howard, the breadth of which it would be superfluous to duplicate. Though drawing extensively on the archive material at Castle Howard which forms the basis of the present thesis, *The Artist and the Autocrat* is overwhelmingly anecdotal, often relating little more than the extraneous

²⁶ British Library, May Morris papers, Add 45347. Howard to May Morris, September 1910

²⁷ Ibid. Magnusson to May Morris, October 10th 1910

²⁸ McCarthy, *William Morris*, p.338

details of the Howards' daily lives, seldom delving beneath a fascinating patchwork of the incidental. The present study seeks to reduce to a minimum the all-pervasive presence of Rosalind Howard wherever it does not demonstrably appear to materially affect either the state of mind or work of her husband. Her journals, in which during the early years of their marriage she was responsible for recording by far the greatest proportion of surviving material concerning Howard's work, as well as that relating to commissions, friendships and reform activities, have been referred to as an evidential source, with a mindfulness of the inevitable bias of many of her pronouncements.

Rosalind Howard expected her affable and unassuming husband to temper the intensity of his artistic endeavours when the responsibilities of either the earldom or of a parliamentary seat should descend, and underestimated his dogged dedication to painting. This resulted in disillusion and recrimination, for Rosalind was to become convinced that Howard possessed a 'lack of inventive genius'²⁹ which would prevent him from the attainment of anything more than moderate success. From the 1880s, the effects on Howard of the gradual deterioration of their marriage and subsequent prolonged periods of separation played their part. From the outset of their relationship Howard had forged a prevailing dependence on Rosalind's approbation, and his convictions faltered correspondingly when she withheld her support.

The present thesis seeks to clarify the conundrum of Howard's artistic and social standing through a critical assessment of his work and commissions, and through examination of the dynamics within the relationships which he forged during the 1860s and afterwards. In order to formulate an adequate treatment of the subject it has been necessary to adopt a principally two-fold approach and consider him in the roles of both artist and patron, their interdependency being such that it is impossible to undertake a treatment of the former without also examining the latter. Treating these facets separately has necessitated chronological repetition.

²⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15

PART I

HOWARD AS ARTIST

CHAPTER 1

Childhood and schooldays 1843-59

George Howard's mother, Mary Parke, died shortly after the birth of her son, yet her influence remained with him; it is not unreasonable to suppose that from her he inherited the urge to paint. Mary had been tutored by watercolourist Peter de Wint (1784 - 1849), and had developed into a competent artist. On her death she left behind a considerable body of work, from which her son drew some of his early inspiration, making copies from several of her topographical paintings.

From a very young age Howard's inclination to draw was a marked feature of his character; aged only nine, his latent romanticism is evident in the sketches of ruined abbeys, castles and architectural landmarks which fill his sketchbooks. Even at this early date some of his drawings evince attempts to formalise a compositional framework. For example, during the 1850s he made several studies of the partially-ruined and picturesque Lanercost Priory near Naworth Castle, depicting it from a number of viewpoints, and incorporating a nearby stone archway as a frame through which to view it.¹ Lanercost was a setting to which Howard would return to sketch and paint on numerous occasions throughout his life.

Howard was evidently fascinated by the history of the locations he drew, at times enlivening his sketches with imaginary figures: *View From Haltwistle* depicts groups of soldiers encamped by a church, whilst *Border Castle*, a drawing of a castle with soldiers guarding its ramparts, is inscribed beneath with the curious inscription '...and all German hackbut men who have long lain at Askerton...'.² Howard's intimate understanding of East Cumbria aroused within him that affection for place which was to become the impetus behind his most characteristic later work. Indeed, there is an emphasis on social historicism in these early sketches which seems almost to anticipate the later tenets of Costa.

Having attended preparatory school at Great Malvern, Howard moved on to Eton, where

¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook XXII. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to obtain images of the drawings and studies in Howard's sketchbooks.

² Ibid.

his preoccupation with drawing continued. Reflective and absent-minded by nature, with a “singular courtesy of manner”,³ Howard was not conspicuously academic. He was regarded with some frustration by his masters, who bewailed his insistence on drawing at the expense of more masculine pursuits. His tutor, William Johnson, wrote thus to the boy’s father:

If he will spend his cash on boating and spend on the river some of the hours he gives to drawing, he will become a regular Eton boy. ⁴

Howard showed little interest in anything other than the Drawing Schools, where he excelled. He carried a sketchbook with him wherever he went, a practice that was to persist throughout his life. He drew constantly, sketching his schoolmates playing cricket⁵ or wrestling, composing his own illustrations to Dickens’ *Pickwick Papers* and producing innumerable drawings of medieval knights and battles. He evinced a precocious facility for capturing the facial features of his companions, which prefigured the closely-observed quarter-length pencil portraits that he delighted in executing throughout his life. Adept at this, he was, however, hampered by an incapacity to render the human form in its entirety, and as time passed he continued to find the construction of figure compositions a challenge. Howard made early efforts to improve his technique by setting himself the task of copying works belonging to the family collections at Castle Howard. Ampthill Park in Bedfordshire, the country house of his maternal grandparents, Lord and Lady Wensleydale, provided further source material, and it was here, with his father, that Howard spent most of his school vacations. Charles Howard⁶ was a loving parent, and a deep bond existed between father and son. The disparity between parental expectation and filial inclination, however, was to cause tension in years to come.

In August 1857 Howard visited the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition at Old

³ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.15. Source uncited

⁴ Ibid. p.15. Source uncited

⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook XXXIV

⁶ Charles Howard was the sixth Earl’s ninth child, and was the seventh Earl’s younger brother. The seventh Earl having died unmarried, his brother the eighth Earl proved incapable of managing his affairs and it fell to the third brother, Lord Lanerton, to manage the family estates.

Trafford. The exhibition, organised by George Scharfe, aimed to present a broad survey of art spanning the Classical and Byzantine periods to the modern era. Howard would have seen there works such as Michelangelo's '*Manchester Madonna*' (c.1497), Bellini's *St Francis in Ecstasy* (1480-85) and Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity* (c.1500), and he recorded his response in a sketchbook:

Am now ...an hour & 1/2 [sic] from Manchester, arrived...yesterday. Been to see ye Ex'n & going [again] tomorrow. Very wonderful. ⁷

As time passed, Howard's self-styled schooling in drawing continued, and by the age of fifteen his resolve to become an artist appears to have taken firm root when he began a more rigorous observance of the principles laid down in Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing*,⁸ listing in one of his sketchbooks dated May 1858 the key points to be observed when drawing from nature.⁹

⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Box 3, unnumbered sketchbook.

⁸ Ruskin, John, *Elements of Drawing*. (London: Smith, Elder, 1857)

⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook LXXXXV

CHAPTER 2

Training and transition 1860-67

During the Easter vacation of 1860 Howard, aged seventeen, travelled to the Continent with his father, touring extensively in France and Germany. In his recollections of the tour he recorded the opportunity to visit the Louvre where naturally he 'looked over the pictures',¹ a disconcertingly desultory reference to what must have been an eagerly-awaited visit. Howard's description of the party's arrival at Boulogne evokes the distinct sense of a perception coloured by the romanticism of Pre-Raphaelitism: 'the streets looked gay and strange.'² Such a description would not be out of place in one of William Morris's prose romances, and prefigures Howard's attunement to seeing beyond and beneath the mundanity of everyday scenes such as street markets and provincial fetes, to the socio-historical continuity of which they were evidential. The studies in the sketchbook used by Howard during this Continental tour³ fall broadly into two categories, revealing his preoccupation with the landscape and its inhabitants: minute studies of dramatic landscape features and architecture, towering castles and rocky outcrops on a grandiose scale, and countless examples of the variations in national costume of both the urban and regional populace.

Throughout the late 1850s and early 1860s Howard immersed himself in the same literature as had the Pre-Raphaelites before him: Tennyson, Kingsley, Carlyle and Browning, developing both his social conscience and a dreamy other-worldliness to which his nature seemed instinctively to lend itself. Whilst at Trinity College, Cambridge (1862-4), he kept a commonplace book into which he copied passages from key works.⁴ During 1862-3, these included Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, Frederick Tennyson's

¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/1

² Ibid.

³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook II

⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/2

Golden City and Ruskin's *The Two Paths* and *The Stones of Venice*, the latter of which he appraised as having 'a fine anthem'.⁵ Also listed are works by Spenser, Newman and Froude and a *Life of Pugin*. Howard also read fourteenth-century poetry and 'old English ballads' which he found in the college library, and which made a lasting impression on him, striking him thus: 'very curious and jolly, true love of nature feeling in them.'⁶ As such observations highlight, Howard was highly susceptible to Ruskin's influence, his writings apparently providing the primary yardstick against which Howard's aesthetic judgments were considered; he was by nature an idealist in pursuit of ideological reassurance and validation.

Howard's preoccupations reveal a palpable sense of his seeking to fashion a framework within which his creativity would be released through an inspirational response to nature. His diary records the restless enervation inspired in one excessively susceptible to the effects of natural beauty:

'Tried to draw oak and divers other things but could not. The day was too lovely.'⁷

Whilst accruing a formidable knowledge of architecture (the infectiousness of which impressed his future wife Rosalind Stanley during their first meeting two years later to such a degree that she considered 'taking it up'⁸ herself), Howard's enthusiasm was increasingly tempered with critical discernment. He would regularly visit historic sites and record his impressions:

'I think I admired Ely more if possible than before. The contrast of the Early Norman and Decorated is delightful.'⁹

Visited churches...and noted tomb forms; a crusader, his knees crossed and praying, different this from the marble bishops casually lounging on one elbow

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112-1. March 1862

⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/10, June 18th 1863. Rosalind recorded in her journal that 'Mr Howard...came with us [to Oxford]...He is very clever...He knows a good deal about architecture...'

⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112-1. March 1862

of the Eighteenth Century.¹⁰

Such observations indicate that Howard is likely also have read and been influenced in his thinking by A.W.N. Pugin's *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture and Contrasts*,¹¹ which encouraged such direct comparisons as the above, in which post-Reformation and neo-classical architectural styles would inevitably be found lacking when evaluated against the humanity and spontaneity of the gothic, advocated by Pugin as the only true Christian architecture. Predictably, Howard here interprets the gothic as encompassing nobility of form combined with spiritual sincerity, whilst the eighteenth century is expressive only of sloth and inappropriately shallow emotion.

Howard's sketchbooks from the early 1860s further testify to the influence of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, being filled with studies of plants, trees and self-absorbed female figures with downcast gaze, which bring to mind the melancholy of Rossetti's early studies of Elizabeth Siddal. Howard's unquestioning adherence to the tenets of Ruskinian dogma was by no means exceptional for an aspiring artist at this date, when the impact of *Elements of Drawing* was still reverberating. However, in Howard's case it also provided a channel and much-needed focus for energies which could otherwise quite possibly have exhausted themselves in seeking an alternative outlet. Howard possessed a deep-seated conviction that only art could redeem him from a self-confessed propensity to indolence. Rosalind Stanley confided to her journal shortly after the two first met:

Mr Howard said he wished to become an artist...He said that he should be lazy in any other profession and that drawing alone could make him energetic. I don't like the idea at all.¹²

Rosalind's observation encapsulated the quintessence of George Howard: if prevented from dedicating himself to painting, he foresaw only an inevitable failure to develop

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Pugin, A.W.N., *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London, 1841) and *Contrasts* (London, 1836)

¹² Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/10. September 29th 1863

beyond the mediocre. In responding to Ruskin, Kingsley, Carlyle *et al* as he did, and by nurturing a capacity for moral discernment with his interpretative development, Howard was able to further counteract this tendency by fostering a latent urge to reform which would later lead to his involvement with such organisations as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry.¹³

At Cambridge, T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (1840-1922),¹⁴ Sidney Colvin (1845-1927),¹⁵ Arthur Sidgwick (1840-1920),¹⁶ Lord Lorne and Algernon Stanley (Rosalind Stanley's brother) formed Howard's immediate circle. Howard did not limit his friendships to those within his own prescribed social sphere, nor did he seek a lofty status within the group; his choice of companions reflected a propensity noted by his tutor prior to his departure from Eton in 1860:

... he forms alliances on a sound basis of moral sympathy and attaches himself to persons of strong character...¹⁷

Howard's was a loyal disposition, and he was to maintain these friendships for the rest of his life. His daughter Dorothy's recollections further emphasise his stance:

My father had no 'attitude' to class. He was simply non-snob...He did not care who or what anybody was. He liked or disliked people, he was comfortable or not comfortable with them on personal grounds alone. He quickly smelt out hypocrisy, posing, pretensions, or bogusness of any sort; those things, and dullness in people, were the damning sins.¹⁸

Howard's continued preoccupation with drawing was becoming ever more clearly a statement of intent, and his disciplined scrutiny of paintings began to give rise to corresponding experiments of his own. Many of the studies in a sketchbook of 1862 are

¹³ Howard was a founder member of SPAB and served on the committees of both organisations.

¹⁴ later co-founder of the Doves Press.

¹⁵ later Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum and Slade Professor at Cambridge, and Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum.

¹⁶ later Assistant Master of Rugby School 1864-79, and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, 1882.

¹⁷ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.16

¹⁸ Henley, *Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle*, p.114

watercolour cloud studies,¹⁹ painted predominantly in tones suggestive of dusk or dawn, and with a concentration on the atmospheric effects of light. His concern with the observation of twilight's transience may have had for its impetus Holman Hunt's *Light of the World* (Keble College, Oxford),²⁰ which he viewed at the 1862 International Exhibition. The painting had an enormous impact on him; he thought it 'the most beautiful I ever saw.'²¹ Having studied it in depth, he made notes on the importance of observing the differences between warm and cold shadows, and real and reflected light.²² Howard's 1862 sketchbooks also contain many experimental watercolour landscape compositions, of which atmosphere and tonal expression are the most striking attributes, the subject matter remaining broadly similar in many examples and providing merely a framework upon which to 'hang' his explorations into varying effects of light. Howard's handling of the medium shows signs of hesitancy and a somewhat heavy opacity, attributable to the fact that he had until this date confined himself almost exclusively to pencil. For some time to come, he continued to rely on the use of pencil beneath watercolour for the modelling of form.

As 1862 progressed, Howard sought to augment his landscape studies with a narrative element, although as yet the figure content that he introduced performed only a subsidiary role. However, many of these studies are highly suggestive of moments of notable significance, with a sense of drama, perhaps even melodrama, being added by lurid skies or lurking shadows. One such example, identifiable as *three figures in a landscape* (watercolour and pencil),²³ presents two female figures accompanied by a

¹⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook V. Perhaps Howard was responding to Ruskin's lengthy analysis of clouds and how best to depict them, expounded in the final volume of *Modern Painters*, which had been published in 1860.

²⁰ Completed in 1853, *Light of the World* was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854; engraving rights were sold to Gambart in 1856. Although he would already have been familiar with the work in its engraved form, Howard is unlikely to have viewed the painting itself until 1862.

²¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook/diary XXVII. Undated. Early 1862.

²² Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/1

²³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook V

young boy, who pause whilst crossing a moor at the approach of dusk. The figures stand in contemplation, apparently arrested by an undisclosed event or sighting. The foreground and middle distance lie in deep shadows of purple and green, whilst the distant hills remain illuminated by the lingering rays of a departed sun. The glowing sky is filled with drifting ribbons of indigo cloud.

In September 1862 Howard paid a visit to the International Exhibition, where he was struck with the apparent superiority of colour evinced by British artists:

Some very true, good Swedish pictures of Peasant life. French pictures good...but the foreigners seem to have no idea of colour when you see ours, the English gallery is glorious! ²⁴

Amongst those he most admired were three 'glorious' pictures by Millais: *Apple Blossoms* (1856-9, Lady Lever Art Gallery), *Autumn Leaves* (1855-6, Manchester City Art Gallery)²⁵ and *Vale of Rest* (1859, Tate Britain) which he liked 'more than ever'. *Autumn Leaves* and *Vale of Rest* were both twilight scenes, the latter being eulogised by Ruskin as the first instance of a perfectly painted twilight.

On the same day that he attended the International Exhibition Howard also paid a visit to the Royal Academy, where he noted in particular *Sir Galahad* (1857) (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) by G.F. Watts, who was to be looked upon by Howard in the light of an advisor and mentor in years to come. *Sir Galahad* had been painted at a time when Watts was closely associated with a number of Pre-Raphaelite artists, and was susceptible to their thinking. In a letter to Lady Duff Gordon concerning the 21-year old Valentine Prinsep, whose younger brother Arthur had modelled for the knight's head, Watts had written:

I have conscientiously abstained from inoculating him with any of my own views...and have plunged him into the Pre-Raphaelite Styx...I found him loitering on the banks and gave him a good shove, and now his gods are Rossetti, Hunt and Millais...I don't know whether you are an admirer of the school - perhaps not. I confess I rather am, and think they have begun at the right end. ²⁶

²⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112

²⁵ This was one of the Pre-Raphaelite works which had such a profound impact on Morris and Burne-Jones when they visited the Academy in 1856.

²⁶ Blunt, *England's Michelangelo*, p.89

Howard also recorded having seen Arthur Hughes' *Bed-Time* (1861-2) (Harris Museum and Art Gallery) during his visit to the Royal Academy, interesting for its tripartite observation of moonlight, firelight and candlelight within a single composition. Later the same year he saw and admired Hughes' *Home from Work* (formerly Forbes Magazine Collection (sold 2003)), considering it to be 'very beautiful; a poem in itself'.²⁷ Over the coming years, Howard acquired several works by the artist²⁸ and forty-four years later, in 1906, he purchased the reduced version of *Bed-Time* (c.1861, oil on panel) (Lord Lloyd-Webber Collection).²⁹

Howard particularly admired three paintings by Ford Madox Brown at the International Exhibition, which possessed 'faithful feeling in colour and meaning'.³⁰ As well as these, he made notes on a painting at the Old Watercolour Society exhibition:

*Devotion...*a single head - a girl looking up, three-quarter face, dark hair, perfectly beautiful, the most perfect work joined with feeling I have ever seen.³¹

As the year progressed, Howard's ambition to pursue an artistic vocation became even more deeply entrenched: the encounters he recorded were those with artists, the literature he read concerned painting and architecture, and the places he visited with unerring enthusiasm were exhibitions, where he filled his commonplace book with observations on drawing and painting technique and descriptions of paintings which abound in superlatives. He began to seek the approbation of those upon whom he might call for support should his plans meet with decided opposition from his family. One such

²⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/1. September 1862

²⁸ Howard was to purchase seven paintings from Hughes, becoming a significant patron to him in Hughes' later years. Hughes related Howard's idiosyncratic approach to selecting works: 'He likes to rake these things out from behind everything else, and having got his hands as black with dust as possible, he supposes it must be a treasure and asks its price, and if I will let him know when he [may] come again to see it cleaned and touched up, which I think is extremely nice of him.' Hughes to Agnes Hughes. Quoted by Stephen Wildman in 'Biographical Introduction' to Roberts, L, *Arthur Hughes*, p.39

²⁹ Roberts, L, *Arthur Hughes*, p.156. The work was acquired on Howard's behalf by P & D Colnaghi & Co at a cost of 30 guineas.

³⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/121/1. September 1862

³¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/1. 29th January 1863

person was Charles Kingsley, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, for whom Howard nursed a deep admiration.³² Theirs was a mutual regard; Kingsley was a source of great encouragement to Howard in his endeavours, praising his sketches and prompting the enthused entry in Howard's diary; 'I had rather be praised by him than any man I know.'³³ Kingsley also recognised in Howard the characteristics which he described thus to Rosalind Stanley prior to their marriage:

Kingsley...said...that George was a real knight and had a noble and chivalrous character.³⁴

His words are further evidence of Howard's unworldliness. A second person upon whom Howard hoped he could call for support was William Wetmore Story (1819-1895),³⁵ the American sculptor who promised to 'make himself useful'³⁶ should Howard ever visit Rome. Story stayed at Ampthill during October 1862, and Howard thrived on the evenings spent discussing art together late into the night, times of stimulation and optimism. He was encouraged by the fact that Story had started his professional life as a lawyer and 'began his art late in life'.³⁷ Already, Howard doubted that his plans would meet with his father's approbation; familial opposition, not referred to in Howard's own brief diary, is, however, confirmed by an entry in Rosalind Stanley's journal dating from the autumn of 1863, soon after the two first met:

'September 29th; ...Mr Howard said he wished to become an artist and study in good earnest giving himself up to it, but that his family strongly objected and wished him to enter Parliament, having a prejudice against artists.'³⁸

³² Howard was amongst those selected to attend Kingsley's private history lectures with the Prince of Wales.

³³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112-1. October 1862

³⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/18. January 28th 1875

³⁵ Story practiced law for five years before turning to sculpture as a profession, becoming a prominent sculptor of classical subjects. He took up residence in Rome in 1856 at the Palazzo Barberini.

³⁶ Castle Howard Archive. J22/112/1

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Casle Howard Archive, J23/102/10

Howard visited G.F. Watts', Millais' and Frederic Leighton's studios during the summer vacation of 1863.³⁹ He wrote feelingly of the works he saw at Millais' and Watts', evidently much affected by the nuances of emotion in the works he encountered:

Went...to see Mrs Millais with Mrs Mildmay - Wonderfully beautiful design for a window by Millais in which the tracery is formed by four angels embracing and holding a ring in the middle - daisy chain round all. A pen and ink drawing of *St Agnes Eve* - wonderful, melancholy...⁴⁰

At Leighton's studio Howard saw the paintings that were to be submitted to the forthcoming Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Howard's notes on the visit demonstrate how even he, evidently enthused by the fineness of Leighton's work, registered its emotional vacuity:

Was greatly surprised and struck. The largest is of Jeremiah finding Ahab and Jezebel in Naboth's vineyard. Wonderful colour. Jezebel very fine. Ahab crouching behind her. A charming one of a girl with red hair carrying fruit with the sun on the back of her head - a gold wall as background - wonderfully pretty and sunny. A wasp buzzing and dark blue sky behind. A medieval crossbow man. Green and black. A May sky, cool, bright picture of a girl in a pink dress feeding peacocks.⁴¹

During this visit Howard confided his plans for the future, and Leighton recommended that he take lessons from Carlo Perugini (1839-1918).⁴² This advice was not acted upon, however, perhaps confirming that the familial opposition which he had confided to Rosalind Stanley was indeed already a significant factor with which he had to contend. In June 1864⁴³ Howard left Cambridge and travelled at once to Alderley in Cheshire,

³⁹ It is unclear whether these visits were made on 'open studio' days or whether some were formal introductions engineered by mutual acquaintances.

⁴⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook/diary XXVII

⁴¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook/diary XXVII. The paintings described are: *Jezebel and Ahab, met at the entrance to Naboth's vineyard by Elijah the Tishbite, who asks them, 'Hast thou killed and also taken possession?'*; *Eucharis*; *An Italian Crossbow-Man* and *A Girl Feeding Peacocks*.

⁴² Perugini first met Leighton as a young man in Naples. They were fellow-students in Paris before moving to London. Perugini was later to serve on the committee of the Dudley Gallery Exhibition Society.

⁴³ Material relating to Howard during this year is particularly scant; Rosalind Howard's journal does not survive, and Howard himself ceased to keep a diary.

where he proposed to Rosalind Stanley. Having gained her acceptance and set a date for the wedding in October, he moved on to London, where he took up residence with his grandparents, Lord and Lady Wensleydale, in Park Street. During August he accompanied Rosalind, her sister Kate and their parents to Carlsbad in Bohemia where, it was hoped, the couple could become better acquainted than their previous sporadic meetings had permitted. Howard was adopted into the challenging and exhilarating family life of the Stanleys and was affectionately described by Kate as:

... one of those people who give a great deal of love and consequently receive a great deal. ⁴⁴

Following their return from Carlsbad the couple's correspondence was rapturous. Ominously, however, Rosalind was already voicing doubts concerning Howard's ability to apply himself to hard study, doubts which presaged her later loss of faith in him. She envisaged a future role for herself in which she would spur him on to ever greater heights of achievement, a stimulus he placidly accepted, avowing that 'if anything could make my life of any use you will.'⁴⁵ It is evident that the couple held divergent views on what constituted studiousness and usefulness in life: Howard naturally applied these precepts to his projected career in painting, whilst Rosalind, one suspects, harboured hopes that this would ultimately be relegated to a secondary status, an adjunct to a career in the political sphere.

Following their marriage, which took place on October 4th 1864, the Howards spent their honeymoon at Naworth Castle,⁴⁶ which Rosalind described to her mother in a letter written on the day following the marriage:

The old place is perfect, peculiarly charming and that sort which sets one dreaming over the past. ⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.33

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.33

⁴⁶ The castle was built in the mid-fourteenth century by Ranulph of Dacre, who had received licence to crenellate in 1335.

⁴⁷ Roberts, C, *Radical Countess*, p.23

Naworth was to become beloved by Morris as one of England's most poetical settings.⁴⁸ Several years later Stopford Brooke (1832-1916), whilst staying at Naworth, was to write of Howard's synergy with the place:

It is not strange, and yet it is, how entirely this place is apart from modern life, and its associations...G.H. is so unlike a mere modern gentleman, and so much of that artist band who belong to all time, in manner and in thought, that the illusion is still supported.⁴⁹

Throughout their honeymoon Howard sketched relentlessly, completing numerous studies of Rosalind, including 'one in a very Pre-Raphaelite manner',⁵⁰ and recording architectural details of historic buildings in the vicinity.

Rosalind Howard's initial unease about her husband's choice of career appears to have been temporarily overcome by her newfound ambitions on his behalf; her encouragement was characterised by an unremitting eagerness in which may clearly be perceived the seeds of her later discontent:

The engrossing desire of my life is to help George by my influence to make him all I think he is capable of becoming, good, happy and useful himself and the means of making others so by his influence and actions and not waste his life.⁵¹

At the beginning of 1865, after spending the winter months largely at Penrhos in Wales, Rosalind joined her husband at Lord and Lady Wensleydale's house in London, and Howard's studies at last began to assume more focus. He gained an introduction to Henry Cole, Director of the South Kensington Museum, through Rosalind's father,

⁴⁸ Morris described Naworth to Aglaia Coronio after staying there with Burne-Jones during the summer of 1874: '...the place is so beautiful that one does not really want to do much & doesn't feel it on one's conscience either... We had a long drive yesterday all along the border, & I sniffed the smell of the moors and felt in Iceland again.' (Henderson, *Letters of William Morris*, p.64)

⁴⁹ Jacks, *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, p.263. Brooke and Howard met in 1868, striking up a deep and enduring friendship. He stayed often at Naworth and accompanied Howard to Italy on more than one occasion. He was assimilated into Howard's circle, becoming especially close to both Legros and Costa. Brooke was a prominent Broad Churchman, but experienced a fundamental conflict between his profession and his passions, art and literature. As Jacks wrote, 'His position in the Church was a barrier which held the prophet and artist asunder' (p.318). In 1880 he resigned his orders and left the Church of England, becoming 'in form what he had always been in spirit - a free man.' (Ibid.)

⁵⁰ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.36. Rosalind Howard to Lady Stanley. Source uncited

⁵¹ Ibid. p.37

Lord Stanley. On February 21st he took a number of his drawings to be assessed by both Cole and Richard Burchett, head of the Drawing Department at the Government School of Design. The meeting is baldly recorded in Rosalind's journal as having been 'very civil',⁵² and as a result Howard was given permission to sketch at the museum. He began by setting himself the task of drawing from casts of the antique, his first project being a study of the head of Germanicus, at which he worked for four hours on his first day. This was no passing fancy or dilettante indulgence; it is evident from the records kept by Rosalind Howard that her husband established a rigid regime and worked for several hours at the museum on a daily basis, enrolling at the School of Design later in the year.

If he were not at South Kensington, Howard could be found attending exhibitions or visiting the studios of other artists, many of whom were acquaintances of Rosalind's elder sister Blanche.⁵³ Soon after their arrival in London, the couple were received at Little Holland House, and thus began Howard's initiation into the artistic milieu he so craved:

G[eorge] & I dine at Little Holland House. Met Mr Watts, Browning, Dicky Doyle...Mr Strachey, Val Prinsep...⁵⁴

Howard found himself uncomfortably situated in society as an aristocrat harbouring

⁵² Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11

⁵³ Howard's introductions to many of the Little Holland House circle and its acolytes were effected by Blanche, the Countess of Airlie. Jane Carlyle had met and befriended Blanche prior to her wedding in 1851 and later recalled a stay at Alderley Park: 'Poor Blanche doesn't seem to know, amidst the excitement and rapture of the trousseau, whether she loves the man or not - she hopes well enough at least for practical purposes!' [Holme, *The Carlyles at Home*, p.79]. Blanche spoke of her husband as having a 'passionless, soulless nature', but wondered if he was perhaps 'a blameless King Arthur whom she misunderstood.' [Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, pp.74-5] She compensated for the tedium of a loveless marriage by capitalising on the Stanley family connections with, amongst others, Richard Doyle, Thackeray and Carlyle. From 1859 the Airlies lived largely in London, and Blanche exercised her talents as a hostess both at Cortachy Castle in Scotland and at her home on Campden Hill, Airlie Lodge. She nurtured a friendship with Sarah Prinsep and herself entertained many of the Little Holland House circle, harbouring a particular devotion to G.F. Watts. It was Blanche who introduced Howard to Valentine Prinsep, by whom he was accompanied on his first visit to Burne-Jones. Blanche was also on good terms with D.G. Rossetti, and it is likely that Howard was first introduced to him through her rather than by Burne-Jones.

⁵⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11. March 14th 1865

sincere artistic ambitions. By nature self-effacing, he failed to forge any significant links during most of these encounters; instead, he commissioned portraits from Watts and Leighton, as Rosalind Howard's journal indicates:

[March 22nd] "Mr Leighton came to see us, he said he would do my picture.
[March 23rd] G went to sit to Mr Watts for his picture... (fig. 1)⁵⁵

Howard had eulogised Watts' portrait-painting following the visit to his studio at Little Holland House in the summer vacation of 1863:

I admire his portraits more than anything. Wonderful truth, character and breadth. ⁵⁶

It is likely that Howard was received into the Little Holland House circle as an informed and talented amateur with potential as a discerning patron, rather than as a fellow-artist. It was not until April 1865 that a more significantly reciprocal and productive relationship emerged, which would redefine his standing.

Howard and Edward Burne-Jones 1865-7

In the mid 1860s Howard was assimilated into what he was later to christen the 'magic circle' of the second generation pre-Raphaelites.⁵⁷ It represented a small and exclusive group comprised of a number of close and lasting friendships forged at Oxford in the 1850s, and one which had remained firmly closed to outsiders, with the notable exception of Algernon Charles Swinburne.⁵⁸ Whether it was Howard's ability as an artist which gained him acceptance or his potential as an apparently wealthy and well-informed client, it would be impossible to surmise. It is undoubtedly the case, however, that it

⁵⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11. Watts' portrait of Howard was completed by May 1865, and was declared 'most beautiful' by Rosalind. Castle Howard Archive, J22/102/11. May 31st

⁵⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Sketchbook/diary XXVII

⁵⁷ Castle Howard Archive J22/55: 'Georgy [sic] and Ned dined with us on Friday, we talked much of you both, and we all agreed that you are the only real friends we had made of late years, who had entered what your husband one day called our 'magic circle' ' Jane Morris to Rosalind Howard, 1878

⁵⁸ Swinburne was assimilated into the group in 1857; Georgiana Burne-Jones later recalled her husband declaring: 'Now we were four in company and not three.' *Memorials*, I, p.163

would have been unthinkable for Morris, Webb and Burne-Jones to have considered forging a deeper relationship with anyone whom they were not able to regard as feeling empathetic towards the regenerative aspirations that formed the essence of the ideology which bound them so closely together.

Howard harboured a deep regard for the work of Edward Burne-Jones long before the two met. Having been newly introduced to Rosalind Stanley, the couple had shared a defining moment of mutual recognition and empathy, standing together deep in contemplation beneath the magnificent *St Frideswyde* window at Christchurch, Oxford, which had been designed by Burne-Jones. Rosalind later recalled the moment in a letter to her mother:

In that church it was in June 1863, George and I on the first day of our meeting first liked one another so well that we stood looking at the painted window which tells the life of St Frideswyde...Kate used to say that even that first day as she saw us together in that church she said to herself...those two will marry. ⁵⁹

That the window's designer should within two years become Howard's closest friend and mentor has a fitting ring of kismet.

On April 8th 1865 the meeting took place that was to have a resounding impact on Howard, and which resulted in one of the key relationships of his life. It is recorded innocuously enough in Rosalind Howard's journal:

G goes to Kensington and with Val Prinsep sees B-Jones and Burton's⁶⁰ studios. ⁶¹

The rapport between Burne-Jones and Howard was instantly evident, as Georgiana Burne-Jones was later to recall:

...young, fresh and eager about everything...Mr Howard's gift as a painter of romantic landscape made him welcome in the studio at once. ⁶²

⁵⁹ Roberts, C, *Radical Countess*, p.18

⁶⁰ Sir Frederick William Burton (1816-1900). Artist, later to become Director of the National Gallery.

⁶¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/1102/12. Saturday April 12th 1865

⁶² Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, I, p.303. Her recollection was in fact coloured by hindsight; in 1865 Howard had not even embarked on his formal training, and had not produced any finished paintings.

The following day the visit was repeated. Howard was promptly taken under Burne-Jones' wing, and a new and infinitely more inspiring routine spontaneously transpired, with the two sketching together from sculptures at South Kensington or from models at Burne-Jones' studio. Here was the enlightened guiding hand for which Howard had so longed, and a relationship resulted which broadened precipitately into the true companionship of mutual accord as Howard's engaging and placid nature fostered an increasing intimacy. Theirs were truly harmonising dispositions, and Burne-Jones was to describe Howard's friendship as having speedily become a necessity to him. Georgiana Burne-Jones was later to confide in Rosalind on hearing that Howard had fallen ill that her husband was 'quite crushed' by the news, for 'Ned does love George so much...'.⁶³ The relationship was cemented in pictorial form when Howard modelled for the face of the eponymous saint in Burne-Jones' watercolour *St Theophilus and the Angel* (Location unknown) (fig. 2).

A defining difference between the pivotal friendship of Burne-Jones' adult years, that with William Morris, and his relationship with Howard, was that free expression concerning Burne-Jones' emotional wellbeing rapidly became indissolubly a part of his intercourse with the latter. Morris was at a hopeless disadvantage during discussions of this nature; he remained unmotivated by the ability, or the will, to elucidate his inner life, his writings acting as a vehicle for emotional expression which otherwise remained largely unuttered. In Howard, Burne-Jones found a receptive confidant.

Perennially aware of the deficiencies of his own training, Burne-Jones provided the basis of a sound academic approach for Howard. Burne-Jones had drawn away from the inspirational influence of Rossetti and his advocacy of instinctive artistry when Watts had undertaken to tutor him following his illness and consequent period of convalescence at Little Holland House during 1858. The milieu within which he had been temporarily cossetted had proved intensely stimulating:

...he found himself surrounded without any effort of his own by beauty in ordinary life, and no day passed without awakening some admiration or enthusiasm.⁶⁴

⁶³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. October 23rd 1874

⁶⁴ Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, I, p.183

Watts' methodology was, in principle, in line with that provided at the Royal Academy, but without the lacklustre routine which was its greatest failing. He taught Burne-Jones 'the discipline of drawing',⁶⁵ as Spencer Stanhope later described it, and the influence of Watts' mentorship remained with Burne-Jones throughout his career.

The ensuing months of 1865 hailed a vital formative period for Howard; not only did it provide him with invaluable critical input, but also served to validate his claim to artistic recognition in the eyes of the other artists with whom he became more closely associated from this date.

Throughout April and May Howard studied the antique intensively, in line with Watts' methodology, working also on anatomical studies. He purchased casts from which to draw at home and visited the British Museum to work from the antique sculptures there. Burne-Jones accompanied him to study the bas reliefs of Donatello (Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery) (fig. 3)⁶⁶ and Lucca della Robbia at South Kensington Museum. After a month of working with Burne-Jones, Howard had mustered confidence enough to show his drawings to Watts.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, his verdict remains unrecorded.

In June Howard returned to Naworth for the summer, and, once there, displayed the indefatigable enthusiasm and associated lack of discrimination to which he was prone, and which would hamper his progress over the coming years. His training thus far remained in its infancy, yet rather than consolidate the benefits he had derived from studying the antique and anatomy, he chose instead to work on makeshift compositions centring around his wife, Naworth Castle and other local landmarks. Rosalind Howard's journal relates how he was also unable to resist the lure of the outdoors:

June 15th: G began a drawing of me sitting in the kitchen garden...G finished

⁶⁵ Waters & Harrison, *Burne-Jones*, p.42

⁶⁶ Although Howard was to sketch from Donatello's *St George* at Orsanmichele in Florence in January 1866, fig. 3 was taken from the South Kensington Museum's sixteenth-century stucco cast of Donatello's bas relief. The upper, lower and right-hand edges of the cast were truncated, and Howard's drawing corresponds more closely to this (particularly in the placement of the right-hand figure at the extremity of the panel and the loss of the upper portion of St George's cloak) than the marble original.

⁶⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11. Sunday 11th May 1865

his drawing of me in the castle doorway.

June 16th: G got up at dawn and did a drawing of me *sul letto*...G finished his drawing of the Dacre Tower...We drove to Lanercost at 5 [where] G began a drawing of the priory.

July 5th: G finishes his drawing of me in the glen. ⁶⁸

It was a routine that persisted into the autumn, and on their first wedding anniversary she was to record, perhaps somewhat wryly:

Our wedding day - G draws on the tower in the morning and in the afternoon he and I go and sit by the Irthing...he bathes and draws. ⁶⁹

The Howards wintered in Italy, travelling southwards to Rome via Genoa, Pisa, Lucca and Florence. Their exhausting itinerary was dictated by the galleries, churches and villas that Howard wished to visit. From Florence Rosalind wrote to her sister Blanche, referring to his evidently disciplined approach:

It is so interesting to study all the early Florentines historically and to trace their rise. We like Botticelli & Lippo Lippi very much...We saw in the Riccardi Palace today a chapel covered with those beautiful Benozzo Gozzoli frescoes of the Adoration of the Magi. ⁷⁰

Perhaps with Burne-Jones' guidance in mind, Howard copied 'some figures of L[ucca] della Robbia' at the Uffizi, and at Orsanmichele 'drew the bas relief of Donatello's S[aint] George'.⁷¹

Having arrived in Rome the Howards stayed as the guests of William Wetmore Story and his wife, who introduced them to 'an American artist, Wild.'⁷² It appears likely that Howard's tuition in oils was discussed during this meeting, as he was to pursue the contact only days after his return to London and receive his first lesson in handling the medium from Wild.

⁶⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11

⁶⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11. October 4th 1865

⁷⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/11. December 16th 1865

⁷¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12. January 5th and 8th 1866

⁷² Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12. February 2nd 1866. Hamilton Wild (1827-1884). Story and Wild were on close terms, having first met in Paris over a decade previously and maintained contact with each other. They both had mutual acquaintances in common with the Howards, amongst them the Lowells and the Brownings.

It was whilst he was in Rome that Howard encountered Giovanni Costa for the first time, and the relationship that was to shape his mature style was tentatively established. However, Costa's influence remained in abeyance for some time to come.⁷³ The trip came to an end in June, and Howard returned to London. He enrolled at Heatherley's art school,⁷⁴ where he was to attend the life class. To date, Howard had worked in pencil, chalks, and watercolour, his sketchbooks demonstrating a solid development in dexterity with the latter. As Newall observes:

Watercolour was a medium which aspiring artists could easily experiment with, simply because its practice did not depend on a studio or elaborate equipment.⁷⁵

However, it had become imperative that he learn to paint in oils, given the persistent obstinacy of the association of watercolour with amateurism, and so pass beyond the sphere of preoccupied amateur. As he would discover in time, however:

The frontier between professional and amateur artists was a closely drawn one. The status and self-esteem of the former group...were not readily achieved by artists who did not need to sell works to earn their livings.⁷⁶

Howard took his first lesson in oils on June 13th from Hamilton Wild, and began a head of Rosalind Howard the very same evening before attending his class at Heatherley's. He visited Leighton the following day to seek his advice on the best way of advancing his training. Leighton, an Associate Academician, advocated attendance at either the Royal Academy Schools or at one of the *ateliers* in Paris. There ensued a period of frenetic activity as Howard prepared for entering the Royal Academy Schools. At Heatherley's he began a copy of the *Discobolus* (British Museum) (fig. 4) to be

⁷³ Both Howard's 1866 trip to Italy and the development of his relationship with Costa will be fully explored in a later chapter.

⁷⁴ One of only two private art schools in London during the mid 1860s. Founded in 1850 by James Mathews Leigh (1808-1860) as the Newman Street Art School, on Leigh's death in 1860 it was taken over by Thomas Heatherley (1824-1913), a former student who had latterly been his assistant. The school's primary function was to coach young artists for entry into the Royal Academy Schools. Burne-Jones had trained there, attending evening life classes. During his attendance there Howard was taught by William Cave Thomas.

⁷⁵ Newall, *Victorian Watercolours*, p.28

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

submitted at the end of the month, working on it for twelve days. After submitting his drawing he resumed his routine of drawing with Burne-Jones, as well as regularly visiting Watts. Perhaps it was also an indication of his growing confidence that he took his sketches to show to Ford Madox Brown. Once again, however, Rosalind Howard, though recording this fact in her journal, omitted to relate Brown's verdict.

Howard's progress under Hamilton Wild must remain a matter for conjecture. Rosalind Howard made daily notes recording her husband's activities, and the fact that Wild is not mentioned further in her journal suggests that the association was a short-lived one. Possibly Howard's concentration on his copy of the *Discobolus* precluded him from taking further lessons from Wild, or he may have thought it better to postpone them until he had gained entry to the Royal Academy Schools, where he could work within a formal framework.

At the end of July Howard was informed that his application to the Royal Academy Schools had been unsuccessful. The news came as a severe blow, and two days later he left London for Naworth. His failure to enter the Royal Academy Schools represented a major crossroad in the development of his career, for now he had no option but to continue taking private lessons and his unhappy course of repeated endeavour, frustration and loss of confidence was set.

Whilst Howard spent the summer at Naworth Burne-Jones awaited his return to town impatiently, writing letters of encouragement and acknowledging the mutually beneficial nature of their regime:

I shall be glad when you come back to town and we can work as we planned: we shall help each other...a good deal.⁷⁷

The summer of 1866 was a painful time for Burne-Jones, and his emotional reliance upon Howard began to manifest itself in his letters as he awaited his return. Having been elected a member of the Old Watercolour Society in February 1864, Burne-Jones had shown his first paintings there the following summer. The *Art Journal's* supercilious review had epitomised the lukewarm critical reception of his submissions:

...upon him has fallen to an eminent degree the common lot of being loved by

⁷⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. September 1st 1866

the initiate few and laughed at by the profligate many.⁷⁸

Despite this, Burne-Jones had gained the patronage of Frederick Leyland and William Graham. His circle of acquaintance was widening, and he had also gained an introduction to the wealthy Ionides family; as a result he met Maria Zambaco (1843-1914), freshly returned from Paris.⁷⁹ Her mother, Euphrosyne Ionides (often referred to by contemporaries as 'the duchess'), had commissioned Burne-Jones to paint a portrait of her daughter with her childhood friend, Maria Spartali. Burne-Jones painted the two young women as *Cupid Finding Psyche* (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), one of the multitude of his subjects that found their inspiration in Morris's *Earthly Paradise*. By the summer of 1866 he was deeply in love. The fatal nature of Maria Zambaco's charms has by now become fabled: her beauty, her vulnerability and her passionate intensity are renowned. Georgiana Burne-Jones was to make only one public, if veiled, allusion to the affair, writing of her husband in her *Memorials*:

...one thing that drew both men and women to him was that he never suspected them beforehand...Never in any sense did he become a man of the world, and up to a certain point it was easy to take advantage of him...Two things had tremendous power over him - beauty and misfortune - and far would he go to serve either; indeed his impulse to comfort those in trouble was so strong that while the trouble lasted the sufferer took precedence of [sic] everyone else.⁸⁰

Bewildered by his feelings for Maria, Burne-Jones wrote to Howard in September, palpably preoccupied:

...with the exception of a red chalk drawing of the Venus for you (which you can't like) and some 15 small designs for the book, I have done nothing but eating and sleeping.⁸¹

Having spent the summer dividing his time between Castle Howard and Naworth,

⁷⁸ *Art Journal*, quoted in Harrison & Waters, *Burne-Jones*, p.84

⁷⁹ Maria was Alexander Ionides' niece, being the daughter of Demetrius Cassavetti and Euphrosyne, nee Ionides. She inherited a fortune and in 1861 married Demetrius Zambaco, a physician, in Paris. She abandoned her short-lived marriage in 1866 and returned to London with her two children. She exhibited both sculpture and medals in Britain and at the Paris Salon.

⁸⁰ Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, I, p.309

⁸¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. September 1st 1866. The book to which he refers is the *Big Story Book*, which metamorphosed into *The Earthly Paradise*, for which he was designing the illustrations.

Howard returned to London in October, apparently reinvigorated and highly motivated once more. He immersed himself in his studies, hiring models of his own for the first time:

Oct 12: G draws from a model at home from 10 to 4 1/2.

Oct 13th: G draws again at home - a model.

Oct 15th: G draws from casts. He walks to Kensington to see BJ.

Oct 16th: G draws at home from a model.

Oct 17th: G draws at home from a model.

Oct 19th: G draws at home from a man model...rides to see Watts.

Sat Oct 20th: G draws again from his man model. He rides at 9am to see BJ. ⁸²

This intensive regime of drawing at home, where he hired an Italian male model and 'an Indian model girl'⁸³ and drew from casts of Hercules and the *Venus de Milo*, or at Burne-Jones's studio, continued into November. Rosalind Howard informed her sister Blanche that 'George is very busy drawing every day from 9 1/2 to 4 1/2.'⁸⁴

Howard had made promising advances during the previous eighteen months, and it is apparent that he now felt the need to re-address the matter of painting in oils. His failure to gain entry to the Royal Academy Schools meant that he must locate a teacher able to devote considerable time to him. Increased demand for Burne-Jones's paintings, though it came as a financial boon, inevitably brought with it associated pressures of work. This year had also brought with it a particularly heavy burden of decorative work for the Firm. These factors, coupled with the recent birth of his daughter Margaret, conspired to make Burne-Jones feel a pressing need to increase his output. In November 1866 he took on his first studio assistant, the youthful Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919), one of Ruskin's protégés.⁸⁵ In short, Howard required more focused tuition than Burne-Jones was any longer in a position to offer.

On November 16th 1866 Burne-Jones took Howard to call on Alphonse Legros, and a

⁸² Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12

⁸³ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12. October 30th 1867

⁸⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/2. October 25th 1866

⁸⁵ In 1865 Murray had written seeking Ruskin's advice on how to become an artist. Impressed by the drawings which accompanied the letter, Ruskin undertook to promote and support Murray, then aged sixteen. He began work at Burne-Jones's studio on a basic wage of twenty-five shillings per week shortly after his seventeenth birthday.

week later Howard received his first lesson in oils from the Frenchman. He continued, however, to draw with Burne-Jones at his studio with some frequency.

When Legros assumed the role of tutor to Howard, Burne-Jones had already laid the foundations of a sound academic approach, albeit a less stringent one than Legros would advocate. Howard had also been set the precedent of taking his subjects from literary and mythological sources, as the indebtedness to Chaucer and classical mythology in his first paintings demonstrates. His adherence to this type of subject matter continued for several years.

Howard and Alphonse Legros 1867-69

Alphonse Legros, referred to by Roger Fry as 'the greatest of modern academic artists',⁸⁶ was born in Dijon. During his childhood he assimilated a deep and loving familiarity with French provincial life during prolonged visits to his relatives' farms in the surrounding locality. These visits produced a profound influence on him and ever-afterwards governed his choice of subjects. Due to his father's numerous career changes, and the family's consequent rootlessness, the countryside and its customs came to represent stability in an otherwise unpredictable existence. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that it would be just such subject-matter that would provide 'des thèmes d'inspiration auxquels, à travers son evolution, il demeura toujours fidèle.'⁸⁷ Legros attended the art school at Dijon and after having worked with two house-decorators, made his way to Paris where he worked with Cambon, principal scene painter at the Opéra, and attended the drawing school of Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudron (1802-1897)⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Sutton, *Letters of Roger Fry*, p.294

⁸⁷ Wilcox, *Alphonse Legros 1837-1911* (Exh., Dijon), 1987, p.14

⁸⁸ Lecoq first outlined his unique teaching method, based on visual memory training, in 1848 in the pamphlet *L'Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque*. He became Director at the Petite École in 1866, but when he embarked on reforming it according to his principles he found himself attacked by its conservative elements and resigned three years later. He then taught at the Lycée Saint-Louis, the École Spéciale d'Architecture and gave private lessons at his home.

at the *École Gratuite de Dessin*.⁸⁹ Here he learned the technique of drawing from memory which became such an important element of his own teaching methodology in after-years.

From the outset of his student days Legros attracted attention; Baudelaire recognised him as 'a man of vigorous mind',⁹⁰ praising *L'Angelus* (Musée d'Orsay) (fig. 5) in his account of the 1859 Salon and recalling with a certain relish his 'discovery' of Legros:

To the natural scent of the forgotten or unfamiliar flower is added the paradoxical scent of its own obscurity, and its positive value is enhanced for us by the joy of having discovered it.⁹¹

At the *Petite École* Legros forged a close friendship with fellow-student Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904), and through him was introduced to James Abbot McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) who had arrived in Paris in 1855. It was a meeting of profound importance: the three became so closely associated with each other in the minds of their fellow students that they were dubbed '*La Petite Amitié de Trois*'. Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Jules Dalou (1838-1902) and Jean-Charles Cazin (1841-1901) were amongst their other contemporaries at the *Petite École*, where they also became acquainted with Degas and Manet. The three were sought out by Champfleury and enrolled as 'realists' in that 'wild battalion, whose leader was Courbet',⁹² opposed to the Académie's stultified routine.

Legros visited London with Whistler during the winter months of 1860-61, where they stayed with Whistler's brother-in-law, Francis Seymour Haden (1818-1919).⁹³ Back in Paris, Legros' reputation burgeoned through the sensation caused by his painting *L'Ex Voto* (Dijon Museum), which received both acclamation and vitriolic criticism, and for

⁸⁹ The school, which was generally known as the *Petite Ecole*, was later renamed the *Ecole des Arts Decoratifs*.

⁹⁰ Baudelaire, *Art in Paris*, p.164. Baudelaire's words are taken from his review of the Paris Salon of 1859, published in four instalments between June 10th and July 20th in the *Revue Francaise*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p.164

⁹² Benedite (*The Studio*, 123 (1923), p.12)

⁹³ Haden qualified as a doctor, but was encouraged by Whistler to take up etching professionally and became a founder member of the Royal Society of Etchers and Engravers.

which the Salon awarded him an Honourable Mention. However, his next exhibited work, *Le Lutrin* (Private Collection), was poorly received. This did nothing to alleviate his precarious financial situation and a period of extreme poverty ensued. Whistler was later to recall somewhat over-dramatically that Legros fell into:

...so deplorable a condition that it needed...God or a lesser person to pull him out of it. And so, I brought him over to London...⁹⁴

It was at this invitation of Whistler's that Legros finally left France during the summer of 1863, aged 26. He had already established a formidable exhibiting record and reputation: his talents had been recognised by Champfleury and Baudelaire, and he had earned himself a position of esteem amongst colleagues and critics alike. Following his arrival in London Legros lived with Whistler, who introduced him to the capital's *avant-garde*: artists such as Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts, and their patrons, amongst them William Graham (1816-1885)⁹⁵ and Frederick Leyland (1832-1892).⁹⁶ Here Legros also renewed his acquaintance with Edward Poynter (1836-1919), George Du Maurier (1834-1896) and Luke and Alecco Ionides, whom he had known in Paris.⁹⁷ Legros' success in London was immediate, if shortlived; Whistler organised an exhibition of his work in his own studio, which prompted the patronage of the wealthy and generous Ionides family, a lucrative outcome indeed. Du Maurier observed that:

Legros is making his fortune...The Greeks are a providence to Jimmy [Whistler] and Legros in buying their pictures.⁹⁸

Watts, himself a longstanding friend of the Ionides family, took a particular interest in

⁹⁴ Pennell (eds), *The Whistler Journal*, p.79

⁹⁵ Scottish merchant, politician and collector and patron. He was one of Rossetti's foremost patrons between 1868 and 1873, and Burne-Jones's from 1865. He was a Trustee of the National Gallery and Liberal MP for Glasgow 1865-74. He amassed a strong collection of early Italian paintings.

⁹⁶ Self-made Liverpool shipping magnate, nicknamed the 'Liverpool Medici'. It was Leyland who commissioned Whistler's famous Peacock Room.

⁹⁷ In 1856, whilst studying at Gleyre's atelier on the Rue de Vaugirard, Whistler had met Thomas Armstrong who in turn introduced him to Edward Poynter, George du Maurier and Thomas Lamont. In 1857 the group was joined by Alexander, or Alecco, Ionides.

⁹⁸ du Maurier to Armstrong, February 1864, quoted in Wilcox, *Alphonse Legros: Aspects of his Life and Work* (Courtauld Institute (1981), p.27)

Legros. Rossetti too worked to establish contact for Legros with other patrons, amongst them James Leathart (1820-1895)⁹⁹ and James Anderson Rose (1819-1890).¹⁰⁰ Such a network of contacts enabled him to obtain an income independent from that generated by the public exhibition of his work.

Legros' stay in England became permanent the following year, 1864, when he became engaged to Frances-Rosetta Hodgson. He returned briefly to France, along with Whistler and Baudelaire, to pose for Fantin's *Hommage à Delacroix* (Musée d'Orsay), and on his return to London he and Frances-Rosetta married, on November 28th 1864.

However, stormclouds were gathering over Legros' relationship with Whistler. In the autumn of that year Whistler, having been consulted by Rossetti, had proposed Fantin in preference to Legros for the completion of a commission from Lady Ashburton.¹⁰¹

Legros was affronted, despite the fact that he was in France at the time, whilst Fantin was in London. Legros in fact undertook the commission, but the rift between them was never breached. In 1865 Whistler wrote to Fantin, suggesting that Albert Moore replace Legros as the third member of the *Amitié de Trois*, and proposed painting a subject which would include himself, Fantin and Moore as an 'apotheosis of everything that can scandalize the Academicians.'¹⁰² Legros was symbolically excluded from Fantin's *Le Toast*,¹⁰³ in which both he and Whistler were originally to have been portrayed, and the *Amitié de Trois* was truly no more.

Henceforth, Legros had little or no contact with Whistler,¹⁰⁴ and 1867 saw the final

⁹⁹ Newcastle businessman and one of Rossetti's principal patrons.

¹⁰⁰ Solicitor and close friend of Rossetti. He acted for Whistler in the Whistler-Ruskin libel case of 1877.

¹⁰¹ Following the death of her husband, she required the copying of three old master paintings in the family collection.

¹⁰² Anderson & Koval, *James McNeill Whistler*, p.151

¹⁰³ *Le Toast* was exhibited at the 1865 Salon. It was later cut up by Fantin, and only the portraits of himself, Whistler and Vollon remain.

¹⁰⁴ He also distanced himself from Rossetti, of whom he had formerly spoken as his best and most useful friend. Their relationship was later resurrected.

confrontation between them, which took place in the office of Luke Ionides. A physical struggle ensued during which Legros was slightly injured. In a letter to Howard, Burne-Jones referred to the 'brutish affair';¹⁰⁵ his sympathies lay emphatically on the side of Legros, as did those of Howard,¹⁰⁶ Watts and Leighton.¹⁰⁷ As a result of his alienation from Whistler, Legros was ostracised, for the most part, from the Greek community, as a letter from Whistler to Fantin testifies:

He's no longer welcome at the Ionides' - he's so pathetic...for my part it's only natural that I should have nothing to do with him.¹⁰⁸

Even before this schism, however, Legros was finding that the financial security, which had appeared so easily attainable following his arrival in London, seemed to be eluding him, and he was confronted by the prospect of renewed poverty. Ironically, it was to the *doyenne* of the Greek community, Maria Zambaco's mother, Euphrosyne Ionides, that he was soon to owe a huge debt of gratitude. When Overand & Gurney's Bank failed in 1866, leaving him in a precarious position, it was she who offered practical assistance by commissioning three paintings and making payment for them in advance, salvaging his financial situation and professional pride at a stroke.

Legros' pecuniary misfortunes fortuitously coincided with Howard's need to locate a teacher as a replacement to Burne-Jones. Legros' credentials were already impressive. He had taught Edwin Edwards (1823-1879) etching techniques during his London visit of 1861, and had given drawing lessons to Maria Zambaco in Paris, which had been

¹⁰⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

¹⁰⁶ Howard even advocated legal action on Legros' part, which, though unrealistic, 'shows what a good fellow he is.' John Rylands Library, Ms 1280. D.G. Rossetti to Charles Augustus Howell, April 20th 1869

¹⁰⁷ Burne-Jones relates an anecdote in his letter, which shows how talked-about the affair was: 'The other night at the Ionides...says Mme Coronio...'could you imitate Mr Whistler?'. Says he [Charles Augustus Howell] with pleasure 'Madame; if you will send for a lad, I'll knock him down before you all.' Collapse of general conversation for a few minutes.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated.

¹⁰⁸ Anderson & Koval, *James McNeill Whistler*, p.168

resumed after her return to London in 1865.¹⁰⁹ His ambitions as a teacher had been made apparent early on:

This genuine interest in teaching is borne out by several sources, among them Benedite, who refers to plans Legros was discussing with Cazin, a fellow pupil of Lecoq's, to found a school in London along the principles of their master.¹¹⁰

The venture was never realised, which Wilcox attributes to the language barrier;¹¹¹ Legros continued to communicate solely in French throughout his life, even with his own children. The height of Legros' career as a celebrated teacher was to come a decade later, in 1876, when he succeeded Poynter as Slade Professor at the University of London.

During 1866, perhaps because of Watts' advocacy of Legros, Burne-Jones forged closer links with him; Legros, who was becoming ever more distanced from Whistler and Fantin, was appreciative of this show of support. Aligning himself to Burne-Jones in a material form, Legros deviated from his habitual subject matter of French peasantry and religiosity, and submitted a painting unique within his *oeuvre* to the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1867: *Cupidon et Psyche* (Tate Britain).¹¹² It cannot be coincidental that whilst Burne-Jones was devoting himself to designing the illustrations for Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, of which Cupid and Psyche's story was a primary element, Legros should choose to follow suit. In his choice of subject, the only mythological work known to have been painted by him, as well as in the minute observation of the foreground flowers and foliage, Legros was exploring elements of classical and nascent Aesthetic art. His continued association with Poynter and Leighton

¹⁰⁹ In Eileen Cassavetti's words, Legros was 'a staunch ally' to Maria. Cassavetti (*Antique Collector*, 60 (1989) p.35). Burne-Jones's involvement with Legros at this date, and the timing of Howard's introduction to Legros by Burne-Jones prompts some interesting questions relating to Legros' possible role in relation to the latter's affair with Maria Zambaco.

¹¹⁰ L Benedite (*Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne*, X (1901)). Cited in Wilcox, *Alphonse Legros: Aspects of his Life and Work* (Courtauld Institute (1981), p.43)

¹¹¹ Wilcox, *Alphonse Legros: Aspects of his Life and Work* (PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute, 1981)

¹¹² It was not his only submission; also included were two more characteristic paintings: *A Portrait* and *The Communion*. *Cupidon et Psyche* was purchased by Howard for £40, and was later to be bequeathed to the Tate Gallery by Rosalind Howard. Howard was to purchase several other key paintings by Legros in the following few years, including *Le Baptême*, *Le Barricade* and *Le Repas des Pauvres*.

go some way to explaining his approach. As Monique Geiger observes, however:

'...leurs conceptions artistiques etaient trop differentes de celles de Legros pour exercer sur lui une influence profonde: des l'annee suivante, il revient a ses themes habituels, inspire de la vie religieuse. ¹¹³

Once introduced to Legros, Howard took immediate practical measures to promote and support him.¹¹⁴ He began acquiring Legros' etchings, amassing an important collection, and in February 1867 he commissioned him to paint a portrait of his father. This was succeeded by a second commission the following year, a portrait of their mutual friend Edward Burne-Jones (Aberdeen Art Gallery) (fig. 6).

G went to Legros at 10 o'clock to sit there whilst Burne-Jones's portrait was begun by Legros who did a pencil sketch of EBJ. ¹¹⁵

Howard was present at Legros' studio throughout the process. William Michael Rossetti saw the painting as it neared completion thinking it 'excellent'.¹¹⁶ The portrait which emerged is one of haunting intensity: full-face and quarter-length, it depicts a man who, for all his direct gaze at the viewer, prompts one to wonder what lies behind his subdued expression. Its shadowy depth of tone also hints at secrecy. In Cassavetti's view the sitter's wedding ring, clearly visible, is the mute key to the painting:

...it was the symbol for all to see that he was not free to follow where the enchantress beckoned. ¹¹⁷

Howard's first lesson with Legros took place on 23rd November 1866, and he returned for his second lesson five days later. Rosalind Howard recorded his new routine:

Nov 28th: G has his 2nd lesson from Legros. Stays there from 9 1/2 to 4 1/2. Paints a woman's head in oils.

Nov 30th: G has his 3rd lesson from Legros. He comes [home] at 4 1/2 having

¹¹³ Geiger, *Alphonse Legros* (Exh. Dijon), 1957, p.77. Legros exhibited a painting of archetypal sobriety, *Les Demoiselles du Mois de Marie*, at the Dudley Gallery the following year.

¹¹⁴ Rosalind Howard too played her part as advocate for Legros; in recommending him to a prospective client, she observed that his paintings were ludicrously underpriced.

¹¹⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 22nd 1868

¹¹⁶ Rossetti, *Rossetti Papers*, p.318

¹¹⁷ Cassavetti (*Antique Collector*, 60 (1989) p.40). This presupposes that Legros was privy to the Burne-Jones - Zambaco affair.

had no luncheon.¹¹⁸

The opening months of 1867 were a period of intensive study for Howard, and he made rapid progress under Legros' tutelage. Years later, one of Legros' former pupils recalled the unremitting emphasis he laid on drawing:

“...persistent drawing must be kept up. Drawing, and drawing evermore, should be the student's motto. The old masters made a practice of drawing, and drawing much, and with a pains [sic] and earnestness which, if imitated by us, would give us more of their power.”¹¹⁹

This was a practice which Legros urged on Howard, the result being daily sessions studying from either the model or lay figure. Not all of these sessions with Legros were lessons, however; Rosalind Howard was careful to differentiate in her journal between those which were lessons and those which were not. One might surmise, therefore, that Howard paid for the hire of the models on these occasions.¹²⁰ He introduced Legros to a number of Burne-Jones's regular models, notably Augusta Jones and Miss Wells, and in January 1867 he began studies for a painting referred to as 'a nymph in a wood' from the latter.¹²¹ Burne-Jones wrote to Howard:

Is it possible that Legros has been so lately introduced to the Classic Grace of Miss Wells! I thought that torso had the widest reputation.¹²²

During this period Howard hired numerous models, working with Burne-Jones or Legros and at other times alone at home, making it difficult to disentangle the complex web of references made in Rosalind Howard's journal to models, studies and projected paintings. Howard's models form a rollcall of the most popular models of the day, painted by the likes of Leighton, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Watts and Whistler. Apart from Augusta Jones and Miss Wells, they also numbered Ruth Herbert, Milly Jones (the wife

¹¹⁸ Castle Howard Archive. J23/102/12

¹¹⁹ Wright, *Etchings, Drypoints and Lithographs of Alphonse Legros*, p.12

¹²⁰ Unfortunately the family account books do not differentiate between models hired at home and elsewhere.

¹²¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/13. Location unknown.

¹²² Castle Howard Archive, J23/27. Undated. January 1867

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¹²¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/13. Location unknown.

¹²² Castle Howard Archive, J23/27. Undated. January 1867

of an actor acquaintance of Whistler's) and Dinah Kingdon, of whom Burne-Jones once wrote to Howard:

'Dinah Kingdon has engaged herself to a consumptive haberdasher and repents herself of it and wishes she were dead: so I have had to do a deal of preaching lately to keep up her spirits. ¹²³

Howard also employed several Italian models, amongst them Antonia Caiva, from whom all the figures in Burne-Jones' *The Golden Stairs* (Tate Britain) were taken, Alessandro di Marco and Marie Colorossi. Burne-Jones wrote to Howard concerning the latter, hinting at the almost military precision with which the more popular models had to organise their days:

I have written for Colorossi for Saturday (because on Friday Miss Kingdon has condescended to sit) - if she cannot come I will engage somehow for you not to lose the day...but your face will be very welcome. I shall be drawing a head from Mistress Milly Jones. ¹²⁴

Howard worked on figure and drapery studies (figs 7, 8 & 9) at Burne-Jones' studio whilst planning for finished pictures with Legros, making the most profitable use of the latter's outstanding powers of draughtsmanship. Indeed, William Rothenstein, a former pupil, adjudged that Legros 'was first and foremost a great draughtsman'.¹²⁵

In March 1867 Rosalind Howard gave birth to the couple's second child. Her journal contains a brief and fascinating interlude during which she evidently conferred on Howard himself the responsibility for keeping it up to date. The entries are succinct, yet furnish the reader with a unique window on his routine at this time, and therefore merit being quoted in full:

[March] 11th: I went to National Gallery with Legros.

12th: Go to Christies in afternoon to buy 2 A Durers...Dine with Ned Jones at 6. Meet Legros.

13th: Draw from Alessandro at Ned's.

15th: Finished head of Miss Jones at Legros. Also did drawing.

16th: Worked at Jones's.

17th: pm walked to Kensington with Ned.

19th: Drew at Jones's. Back by Legros.

20th: Did not draw today. [This was the day upon which Rosalind gave birth to

¹²³ Castle Howard Archive, J23/27. Undated. August 1867

¹²⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated. 1867

¹²⁵ Rothenstein, *Men & Memories*, p.22

their son Charles.]

21st: Went to draw at Jones's.

23rd: Went to Rose's sale at Christies...bought a small BJ landscape for £6-10. Went with Howell and Legros to see Rossetti.

24th: Called on Millais - saw Jephtha's Daughter but did not like it. BJ dined with me.

25th: Drew from Miss Wells at Ned's.

26th: Drew at Jones's.

27th: Did studies at home from wax figures for draperies...Refused to stand for Huddersfield - asked by Lord Grey. Harrison abuses me for this.

29th: See Legros.

30th: Drew at Ned's. See Watts who praised my drawing.

April 1st: Draw from Miss Wells at Ned's.

2nd: Papa sits to Legros. Portrait finished.

3rd: Drew at Ned's. Breakfasted with Leighton at 12. Howell, Legros, Boyce, Ned, Val. Saw Val's picture.

5th: Drew at Ned's study for Alessandro. Sit to him in afternoon. ¹²⁶

Howard was working on three paintings concurrently during the spring and summer of 1867: 'nymph in a wood', *Lady of Airlie* (Private Collection), and *Palamon from his prison cell sees Emilia picking flowers. From Chaucer's Knight's Tale* (Location unknown). The former two were oils, the third being a watercolour. Miss Wells modelled for all three.

Nymph in a Wood remained unfinished and gave way to *Emilia*, which Howard painted at Naworth during the summer of 1867. Elements of the drapery were reworked under Legros' supervision and further repainting was subsequently required to rectify his intervention:

G...works at Emily [sic] of wch the face is spoilt by a wash Legros put on. ¹²⁷

Lady of Airlie (fig. 10)¹²⁸ was Howard's most ambitious work to date. He made studies for it during May and June 1867, working from Miss Wells at Burne-Jones' studio, where he was often joined by Legros:

G draws at BJ - Legros joins him there and praises his studies for the Lady of

¹²⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/13. It is likely that Howard is referring to sitting to Burne-Jones for the head of *St Theophilus*.

¹²⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/13. November 26th 1867

¹²⁸ The painting's full title was *Helen, Wife of the Eighth Lord Ogilvy, during the burning of Airlie Castle by the Earl of Argyll, July 7th 1641*, an event which held some significance for Howard, since Rosalind's sister Blanche was married to Lord Airlie.

Airlie.¹²⁹

Howard made his preparatory studies for the drapery and heads either at home or at Burne-Jones's studio, whilst he worked under Legros' supervision at the composition and landscape elements. *Lady of Airlie* is a key work within Howard's *oeuvre*; it is a transparent amalgum of styles and influences, owing much to both Legros and Burne-Jones, but as yet showing no hint of Costa's influence.

Lady of Airlie's composition unquestionably owes a great deal to Legros' *The Death of St Francis*, a painting upon which he had worked intermittently since 1863, and which he completed in 1868.¹³⁰ In both *St Francis* (fig. 11) and *Lady of Airlie* the principal figure lies prone and senseless at the point of death, ministered to by a small group of kneeling attendants. The configuration of the figures, though in reverse in Howard's picture, is broadly similar to that of *St Francis*, and the draughtsmanship of the broad sinuous sweep of undulating horizon in Howard's painting echoes that in Legros'. Both *St Francis* and *Lady Airlie* invite the contemplation of life's transitoriness within a framework of spirituality introduced by the presence of the monks and nun respectively. Such overt religiosity and sobriety of subject-matter is typical of Legros, and one must attribute the nun in Howard's painting to his influence, since a characteristic feature of Legros' work is a religious presence, whether in the form of a figure or by the incorporation of religious iconography. However, any resemblance between the sentiments informing the two works is thereafter merely superficial. Howard depicts a tragic premature death precipitated by a calamitous and violent event, whereas Legros' painting is suffused with an aura of calm and acceptance. One epitomises the drama of despair, the other an intense religious fervour. In *St Francis* a monk reads from a bible to the dying saint, whilst in *Lady of Airlie* the nun, his nominal equivalent, lacks any means other than a prayer with which to soften Lady Airlie's final moments, and the fifth female figure sits apart, wringing her hands disconsolately. In Legros' *oeuvre*, Death's

¹²⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/13. June 6th 1867

¹³⁰ Legros worked concurrently on an etching of the same subject (fig.). This is likely to have been amongst the many etchings purchased by Howard; an inventory (Castle Howard Archive, J22/141) lists one of his fifty-three Legros etchings as 'Dying Monk'.

guise is dictated by the spiritual state of the dying, and it would seem that this principle too was in this instance assimilated by Howard.

The subsidiary fifth figure mentioned above is *Lady of Airlie's* chief imperfection. She is awkwardly placed in the middle distance, positioned in a spatial vacuum and obstructing the eye from passing directly from the principal group to the flaming castle on the hillside beyond. This figure represents the only overt expression of woe in the painting, but her melodramatic pose undercuts the sobriety of the other attendants, who in their impassivity of expression declare a debt to Burne-Jones.

Lady of Airlie is an uneasy image. There is a vacuity of resonance resulting from the direct imitation of Legros' work without a true interpretative interest in either religion¹³¹ or mortality. Its subject-matter was uncharacteristically harsh for Howard, and consequently he could deliver it with little conviction. *Lady of Airlie* appears, therefore, as a stylistic and technical exercise rather than an expressive statement.

Towards the end of 1867 Leighton visited Legros' studio to assess the progress of his pupil, and was afterwards to write most encouragingly to Howard:

I have been to Legros' studio and now write thinking that it may not be quite indifferent to you to hear with what unfeigned pleasure I saw the picture on which you are working. I was pleased to see what you have unlearned - pleased at what you have acquired, but still more at what your work reveals through all those imperfections which naturally attend a first picture, a grave and distinguished artistic feeling which, developed by the energy and application of which I know you are capable, must assuredly make an artist of you. I write purposely with great sobriety that you may see in my words not the civility of an acquaintance but the sincerity of a friend.¹³²

The latter part of 1867 had passed painfully for Burne-Jones; in August he had written to Howard from Oxford, where he and his family were staying:

I am a much troubled Ned at present...I do nothing but an occasional sketch of the stem of a tree (which is the easy part)...I do nothing much here: sometimes the root and trunk of a tree is drawn as I said: oftener still it is not drawn...Dear

¹³¹ Rosalind was to comment on her husband's faith: 'G...has a religious feeling tho' rather dormant.' Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 5th 1868

¹³² Castle Howard Archive, J22/53/12. Undated

child I miss you terribly... ¹³³

On their return, the Burne-Joneses found that the renewal of their lease at Kensington Square had been refused by the new freeholder, and they set about searching for a new home. Georgiana wrote to Rosalind Howard on the subject, laying emphasis on the importance of continued proximity to the Howards:

...we are very anxious not to leave this neighbourhood...one of our chief reasons for wishing to remain...is that we might not lose sight of you at all...You have become part of our lives now. ¹³⁴

Just prior to their move to The Grange at Northend in Fulham, Burne-Jones sent Howard a description of their new abode, a delightful blend of dismay and proprietorial pride:

I feel oppressed - the truth is I have just seen the house we have taken, and it is too grand and large and splendid for us: we have no right to such a place...I must work hard...It reminds me a good deal of Castle Howard - I should say rather it had the scale of that mansion combined with the more sympathetic aspect of Naworth...there is a madhouse nextdoor, which is convenient, for I hate distant removes, and the next one I have to make can be a brief one. ¹³⁵

His allusion to the 'madhouse nextdoor', though cloaked in that tone of hyperbole which characterised much of his correspondence, was one that concealed real poignancy. He was prone to bouts of negativity and pessimism, and at his most melancholic Burne-Jones craved seclusion. In the same letter, Burne-Jones made Howard an offer of studio space:

...dear boy how glad I shall be of you...you can have my studio till Xmas if you like...I must work hard and you will make me cheerful when you come. ¹³⁶

Howard would have no studio of his own until Palace Green was completed in 1872, and must have found the constraints of Park Street unconducive to the quietude required for serious study.

¹³³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated, August 1867. Burne-Jones habitually addressed friends and studio assistants with diminutives: T.M. Rooke was 'dear little Rookie' and Charles Fairfax Murray 'little Murray'. The practice emphasised Burne-Jones's seniority.

¹³⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/27. August 18th 1867

¹³⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. October 22nd 1867

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Correspondence suggests that Howard had so far remained in ignorance of the accelerating intensity of the relationship between Burne-Jones and Maria Zambaco. However, on his resumption of study in the autumn of 1867, it has been noted that he spent a greater proportion of his time working alone at home than had hitherto been the case, which may indicate that he felt it necessary to avoid the embarrassment of undisclosed confidence. There are conflicting accounts of how many of Burne-Jones' associates were privy to his relationship with Maria at this date; if Howard were not amongst the number, it is reasonable to conclude that he had at least begun to formulate suspicions.

CHAPTER 3

'No longer a mere amateur': exhibiting, picture sales
and illustrative work 1867-1872

Towards the close of 1867 Howard took his first tentative steps as an exhibiting artist. His first exhibited work, *Study of a Head* (Location unknown), hung at the Dudley Gallery's Winter Exhibition of Cabinet Pictures in Oil, and was priced at £25-0-0.

It was natural that Howard should opt to exhibit at the Dudley; he probably lacked both the confidence and the inclination to send to the Royal Academy after having so recently failed to gain admission as a student there.¹ There were limited opportunities to show their work for those aspiring artists who were not members of the Old or New watercolour societies, nor able to exhibit at the Royal Academy. From its inception the Dudley was associated with the experimental and progressive; no doubt its democratic ethos appealed to Howard also; it was open to professional and amateur alike.²

1868 was a year of great import for Howard. It began auspiciously when Charles Augustus Howell (1840-1890),³ assuming the role of informal picture agent, secured Howard's first sale of a painting, the watercolour *Emilia*. Whistler later recalled Howell and his involvement with Howard, summarising his influence as at once irresistible and enthralling yet with rather predatory undertones:

...he acted as artistic advisor to Mr Howard. He had the gift of intimacy; he was at once a friend, on closest terms of confidence. He introduced everybody to everybody, he entangled everybody with everybody, and it was easier to get involved with Howell than to get rid of him.⁴

There remained about Howard the aura of an *ingénue*, which Howell was quick to

¹ Howard was later to refer to the Royal Academy as a 'meritorious receptacle of dry rubbish'. Castle Howard Archive, J22/31. Sidney Colvin to Howard, December 30th 1874

² Although his association with them was not to develop for some years to come, several fellow Etruscans also exhibited regularly at the Dudley from the late 1860s.

³ Howell was born in Portugal and came to England aged sixteen. He acted as Ruskin's secretary between 1865 and 1870, later becoming secretary to D.G. Rossetti. His honesty was questionable, but his charisma was such that his misdemeanours were often overlooked by his friends and associates.

⁴ Pennell (ed.), *The Whistler Journal*, p.59

exploit, rapidly becoming indispensable not only as promoter of his paintings but also as the procurer of quality antique furniture for Palace Green until the relationship, as so often with Howell, had swiftly run its course and become more of a burden than a blessing to Howard.⁵

Rosalind Howard's journal records the sale of *Emilia*, immediately prior to its exhibition at the Dudley:

Jan 16th: Had a pleasant letter from Howell saying G's picture *Emilia* is sold - a man saw it at the frame maker & at once bought it for £25. ⁶

This was a moment of great significance for Howard; it clarified his position in relation to his fellow artists, raising him above that most stigmatic level of amateurism. He was elated by the sale. He had begun *Emilia* during the summer of 1867, and it must have added to his short-lived euphoria that it had sold despite the intervention of Legros. Rosalind Howard recorded her own thoughts on the matter:

G's first sale...I am glad G has sold *Emilia* & now he is no longer a mere amateur - for better or worse he has taken his stand amongst the artists...⁷

She also wrote to Charles Howard:

Legros was so delighted that G should have sold his picture...He certainly has a wonderful power of teaching. Under no other possible circumstances could George have made the progress that he made in one year's time since he has worked under Legros. ⁸

There was further encouragement from other quarters:

January 27th: Palgrave walked with George to Legros. He admired his picture [*Lady of Airlie*] and told me since he was astonished at the step he had made in painting...

January 28th: G worked at Legros...a Polish artist went to see Legros. Great

⁵ Ruskin wrote to Howell in October 1870: 'I...must beg you to conduct the business now between us by correspondence only'. His faith in Howell had been shaken by circumstances never revealed but which Howell tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade Ruskin not to mention to Howard. It may be of some significance that Howard's relationship with Rossetti cooled at the very same time. He returned to Rossetti a sketch of Jane Morris for the sale of which Howell had acted as agent.

⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. January 16th 1868

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wilcox, *Alphonse Legros: Aspects of his Life and Work* (Courtauld Institute (1981), pp.49-50)

admiration of G's picture.⁹

Howard, having finished *Lady of Airlie* soon afterwards, made ready to leave for a study trip to Antwerp at the behest of Legros, reading Cavalcasselle's *Flemish Painters* in preparation. Leighton had earlier suggested that he study in Paris, but Legros advised against this, asserting that the *ateliers* there were filled with students who were: 'such 'canaille' he thinks George would not be happy in them.'¹⁰ Perhaps he retained a residual prejudice against Paris and its associations with Whistler and Fantin.

In Antwerp Howard met Charles Napier Hemy (1841-1917),¹¹ a former employee of the Firm, who introduced him to Henri Leys (1815-1869),¹² who had a teaching pedigree of long standing. Howard studied independently, and at the Academy:

We have got into our routine now - G draws at the Museum fr 9 to 1...We dine at 1...then return to the Museum till 4 - at 5 G has a cup of tea and returns at 6 to the Academy.¹³

At the museum Howard was copying a crucifixion by Antonello da Messina, whilst at the Academy he was drawing that students' stalwart, the *Apollo Belvedere*, and working from Van der Wryden's *Seven Sacraments*. Rosalind Howard recorded his progress with the latter work:

George has painted the figure of the penitent thief in his copy & he finds the figure part easier than the landscape.¹⁴

The above entry sheds an interesting light on Howard's development at this time; it is evident that he had concentrated on figure compositions with Legros, and that the

⁹ Castle Howard Archive J23/102/14

¹⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/1. Rosalind Howard to Blanche Airlie, November 1st 1867

¹¹ Howard had a letter of introduction from Warrington Taylor, business manager to Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. Hemy was a genre and narrative painter who, having spent eight months with the Firm, had gone to Antwerp to study under Leys. Rosalind Howard observed that his paintings 'are very much in imitation of Burne-Jones.' Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. February 6th 1868.

¹² History painter. Lawrence Alma-Tadema had become his pupil in 1859. Leys was working on frescoes in the hall of Antwerp's Hotel de Ville at the time of Howard's visit.

¹³ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. February 10th 1868

¹⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. February 18th 1868

emphasis during his sketching trips and study-taking with Burne-Jones had also been centred on drapery or figure studies and copies from the antique. Clearly, then, Costa's influence was yet to be felt as a contributory factor in his work, and his impact on Howard appears to have been somewhat less immediate than has previously been suggested.

Howard's stay in Antwerp was brought to a premature conclusion by the news that his grandfather was dangerously ill. As he prepared to return to England he crammed last-minute studies into his remaining two days, finishing his copy of the *Seven Sacraments* and visiting the Rubens altarpiece at St Augustine, about which he was unenthusiastic. At Bruges, whilst *en route* to England, Howard visited the Hôpital St Jean and spent 'a delightful hour'¹⁵ amongst the Memlings there. At Ghent he was particularly struck by the quaintness of the narrow back streets and also:

...saw that glorious Van Eyck at St Baron of the Adoration of the Lamb...we looked at it a long time...¹⁶

Despite the evident discipline with which Howard tackled his studies during his stay in Antwerp, the significance of the trip remained primarily academic. It was a time for application rather than inspiration, and the appeal of both the city and the works that he studied there failed to evoke a response of any great depth. Quite simply, Howard was an instinctive classicist, drawn to the light and colour of Italy rather than the sobriety of Belgium.

Howard's grandfather died before he reached England, and he arrived back only in time to attend the funeral before once more resuming his studies with Legros. During a visit to Legros' studio, Blanche Airlie saw and greatly admired *Lady of Airlie*, thinking it 'very beautiful'.¹⁷ Howard, however, refused her wish to purchase it. Lord Airlie followed up her request with one of his own:

I went yesterday ...to see your picture at Legros. I think it very good indeed & should like much to buy it...Of course it is of more interest to me than to anyone else & I should not like to lose it...It will be a great disappointment to both of us

¹⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. February 21st 1868

¹⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. February 22nd 1868

¹⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 2nd 1868

if we do not get the picture.¹⁸

Evidently this offer, following hot on the heels of his previous sale, gave Howard strengthened confidence and having considered the matter he called on Lord Airlie and proposed a scheme whereby he would permit him to acquire the picture for £35, on condition that he agreed to commission a work from Legros to the value of £100. In advocating Legros in such a way, Howard, with the best of intentions, concurrently decried his own worth by accepting a far lesser sum than Airlie had in fact been willing to pay. Rosalind Howard recorded in her journal that: 'G gets £35 for his [picture]. He would accept no more. Airlie expected it would be £80.'¹⁹ The proceeds from his first sale, *Emilia*, Howard had donated to a charity aiding the East End poor, and this second sale he used as a lever to promote Legros. Despite his good intentions, and the fact that picture sales were representative of a wider recognition and vindication of his artistic worth, Howard was establishing an ill-considered precedent by his actions. In conducting himself with the generosity of a patron rather than with the singlemindedness of a professional, he colluded in perpetuating the conceptual rift between himself as talented aristocrat and the profession within which he was seeking to establish himself. In his naivety, he failed to recognise that it could now logically be inferred by other potential clients that to pay for one of his paintings was a superfluity. Therein lay the insoluble dichotomy of his position, to which he unwittingly added further ambiguity by dealing with the revenue from his first two sales as he did. For whatever reason, he was to sell no more paintings in the near future; the only income generated by his art during the decade to come was remuneration for illustrative work.

Following Howard's return from Antwerp in February 1868, a new phase evolved; in addition to continuing work on his easel paintings, he was now introduced by Legros to etching:

March 2nd: G went to draw at Legros...did a pencil drawing of Legros river landscape in order to make an etching of it... (fig. 12)²⁰

¹⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/1. March 4th 1868.

¹⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 5th 1868

²⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 2nd 1868

There was to be seen in Howard's work hereafter a new diversity both of subject-matter and medium, which embraced the serious reconsideration of landscape. However, a growing dissatisfaction began to permeate Howard's self-evaluation over the coming months, undermining the confidence that he had so recently established. His negativity intensified when he visited the Dudley and saw *Emilia* again, this time hung with Robert Bateman's *Daffodil* as its pendant:

Mar 14th: G was not pleased with the appearance of his picture in the Exhn - thought it looked cold in colours & hard. ²¹

Virtually a whole year later he wrote to Howell, informing him that his own pendant to *Emilia* was now finished, displaying rather transparently his hopes for a further sale:

Can you give me the address of the wise man who bought my picture as I thought of writing to tell him that the pendant to it was to be seen at Ford & Dickinson or I hope later at the Dudley; but of course I do not wish him to feel in the very slightest bound to have it. ²²

There is no indication in the family account books that this work found a buyer.

Concurrent with his new concentration on etching (he visited Edwin Edwards' (1823-1879)²³ studio on March 3rd to view his etchings) Howard embarked on several new easel paintings: *Oh don't deceive me*,²⁴ for the preliminary studies of which Rosalind modelled, to be superseded by Dinah Kingdon as it progressed.²⁵ He also began *Eve*, the model for which was again Miss Wells (this remained a drawing), 'the woman with

²¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 14th 1868

²² Rylands Library Archive, Fairfax Murray Collection, 1280/78. January 1st 1869

²³ Edwards practised as a successful lawyer before determining to become a professional artist. In 1861 Whistler introduced him to Fantin, and the two forged a lifelong friendship. Edwards abandoned law in 1873 after devoting an increasing amount of his time to art. He was a prolific etcher, and President of the Hogarth Club.

²⁴ This painting was also referred to as 'the woman singing in the valley' or *Early one Morning*.

²⁵ The subject was treated again by Howard, as an illustration for his *Picture Song Book*, published in 1910. The whereabouts of *Oh don't deceive me*, *Eve* and the *Jason* drawings are all unknown.

the baby', drawings suggested by passages from Morris's *Jason*,²⁶ and *Venus and Cupid* (York City Art Gallery) (figs 13 & 14).

G...walked to Legros to show him what he had done & Legros was pleased & said he had improved & that the subject he had thought of (Venus pointing to some people & making Cupid shoot) was very good.²⁷

Despite the apparent promise shown by Howard at this time, the negativity and dissatisfaction creeping into his own views of his work hardened as he forced himself to continue with copies from old masters. His interminable and unsatisfactory copying of the Mantegna *Resurrection*, which he had borrowed from Lord Taunton, is a case in point. After almost a month of working intermittently at the copy, Howard concluded that it was 'stiff on the outline.' (fig. 15)²⁸

Howard had continued to work regularly with Burne-Jones, but the crisis of Burne-Jones' love affair was approaching, and Howard is likely to have felt uncomfortable at his new studio at the Grange. Indeed, Burne-Jones had recently written asking him not to visit on certain days.

...the only two days at all engaged are Tuesdays and Saturdays when Mme Zambaco comes, and there is no reason why you should not come then if you want except that the room would be so full & I can't work easily with many by - also complexity of models would be trying. I am sure also she would change days if you found that you wanted to come for any purpose...I will always tell you when I have models that would interfere with work as I tell her..²⁹

This letter marks a departure from the hitherto mutually accepted practice of working together in Burne-Jones' studio, and it made clear to Howard that the former spontaneity of his visits could be no more. Following receipt of the letter Howard's work practices changed markedly, and he worked increasingly from models at home. It seems likely that this abrupt change did little for his confidence:

²⁶ 'G draws at home from Miss Wells a red chalk study of a woman stepping into water suggested by a passage in Morris' *Jason* - he has done it well.' Castle Howard Archive, J23/10/14. March 28th 1868

²⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. 10th March 1868

²⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. April 7th 1868. Howard gifted his copy to Legros the following year, inscribing the reverse 'À Legros de la part de son élève G Howard, 1^{ère} Mars 1869...'

²⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

Mar 26th: G went to draw fr Miss Wells at Burne Jones['] house. He had a pleasant day in his studio but finds it more easy to work at home...

April 1st: G drew at home fr Miss Wells - but drew very badly - I wish he was in humour for doing good work. ³⁰

Left largely to his own devices he was unable to focus, working piecemeal at several planned paintings yet advancing significantly with none; he was to abandon *Venus and Cupid* despite its promising start and the encouraging comments that had been made about it. He returned to it the following year, making new studies. Howard had a frail constitution, and throughout his life emotional turmoil brought with it physical symptoms and associated weakness. Harrassed by lack of progress with his work and deep concern for his friend, he was suffering from persistent headaches and insomnia which prompted a decision to leave London and take a short holiday at Aylmouth. Despite his ill-health, he sketched persistently out of doors as Rosalind's journal testifies, abounding in such entries as:

Jun 14th: G drew some studies of furse on the grass hills that look over the hills...G painted an oil sketch on the far side of the river.

18th: G draws on the links

19th: G paints

21st: G...made an oil sketch near the river of the red roofed houses of the old town...He made studies of the furse. ³¹

Throughout his life Howard was to turn to the cathartic properties of *plein air* sketching at times of ebbing confidence. On leaving Aylmouth the couple returned to Naworth for the summer, where Howard sketched from the local landscape and used members of the family as lay figures for drapery studies. He also painted portraits of several family members and began a copy of his *Lady of Airlie*, this version to be called *Airly Beacon*. There continued constant digression from one subject to another:

..George is always wanting me to sit to him for one picture or another... ³²

Howard's concern for Burne-Jones had led him to discuss the matter with Philip Webb. Burne-Jones wrote to him in September, offering reassurance:

Webb tells me bad unfaithful things of you - that you asked strange questions

³⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 26th 1868

³¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102.14

³² Castle Howard Archive, J23/1. Rosalind Howard to Blanche Airlie. August 11th 1868

about me...that you asked him even if I cared as much for you - which was unfaithful of you - I have been ill all the year - really ill, in head & every way & have been poor comfort for any friend - all have been merciful & remembered me at my best & forgiven me - I have tried everyone this year - if I could have pointed definitely to a heart disease or cancer or consumption or something clear & obvious it would have been bearable to my friends but I have had no such luck only I have felt intensely melancholy and depressed - the result of a good couple of years pondering about something & I have been a nuisance to everyone - and now I am much better & feel more likely to live & do good work than I have for a year past - dear I am not fickle - if I have seemed apathetic at any time I have been so weighed down with oppression that I have been intolerable even to Georgie. I can't bear for you to think me trivial or changeable...³³

The Howards spent September with the Coutts-Lindsays at Balcarres Castle in Fife, and during October stayed with Rosalind's family at Alderley in Cheshire. Here Howard made studies for his second etching, a landscape of a steep hillside topped with beech trees (fig. 17). He continued with it as soon as he returned to London in October.

The summer had acted as a respite from the harrassment of self-doubt, but had not proved a solution, and on Howard's return to London the cycle began once more:

Nov 9th: G & I went to Legros...he was to finish my portrait there & Legros nearly rubbed the whole thing out causing G to repaint the greater part of it. It was a very trying day to George to see Legros working at his thing & altering it...

10th: G works at home fr[om] Miss Wells. Does not succeed with his work and feels very much worried all day.

14th: G tries to work at the little portrait of me but finds the head is too small & must be rubbed out.

19th: G works at home - Legros comes...& makes G paint out his yellow drapery into a dark blue one.³⁴

Howard was ceasing to yield the benefit from Legros' interventive methods, which seem to have gone beyond the instructive and become instead, for Howard at least, intrusive.

Legros' financial circumstances remained precarious, and in January 1868 he was considering returning to Paris. His artist friends, amongst them Leighton and Watts, made a concerted effort to procure new buyers for his work, contributing significantly to his change of heart and resulting decision to remain in London. As the year progressed, it brought with it the beginnings of renewed success for Legros. As well as acquiring

³³ Castle Howard Archive, J23/27. Undated

^{34SS} Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14

several new patrons, he diversified in his exhibiting practices, reducing his dependence on the Royal Academy. He exhibited for the first time at the Dudley Gallery's winter exhibition, showing *Les Demoiselles du Mois de Marie* (Victoria and Albert Museum). Whistler was enthused by the work despite the personal differences between them. Legros also showed two landscapes: *Souvenir d'Espagne* and *Don Juan showing his Castle to Eglina* (Musée des Beaux Arts de Dijon). This reversal in Legros' fortunes inevitably meant that he devoted less time to Howard at a vital juncture when reassurance and affirmation were crucial. Howard now worked largely at home and unsupervised, hiring models almost daily and interspersing work on his easel paintings with portraits of family members (fig.16). The closing weeks of 1868 passed without his having completed any of the many projects he had started, with the exception of his etching of beech trees, which was printed at the end of September.

Given Howard's increasing lack of guidance at this period, and the nature of the subjects that he was tackling, an association with other young artists of similar leanings must have held appeal for him. He appears to have begun casting about for a group or movement within which to incorporate himself. He had formed an acquaintance with Simeon Solomon (1840-1905) when the two had met in August 1867. Although not on intimate terms, visits to Solomon's studio, either alone or accompanied by Burne-Jones, were fairly commonplace throughout the late 1860s. Howard was only in his mid-twenties at this time and, despite admiring Solomon's work, appears to have been somewhat perturbed by the artist himself, whose thorough disregard for convention and increasing dependence on alcohol proved a little too much for him. Solomon wrote to Oscar Browning rather scathingly on the subject:

George Howard called the other day, I hope he doesn't want to lecture me. ³⁵

Their relationship developed no further, despite the growing closeness of the association between Solomon and Burne-Jones. However, the connection bore fruit when in January 1868 Howard encountered three of the painters with whom he was to align himself for the succeeding three years:

G...is gone this evening to a little party at Mr Solomon's studio...He met

³⁵ Reynolds, *The Vision of Simeon Solomon*, p.21

Wooldridge, Clifford & Champneys.³⁶ Young artists who are tremendous and devout worshippers of Ned Jones of whom they stand in the greatest awe, they think him such a great man.³⁷

Also associated with them were Walter Crane (1845-1915),³⁸ Robert Bateman, Sacheverell Coke, Edward Henry Fahey (1844-1907) and E.R. Hughes, the nephew of Arthur Hughes. They came to be known as the 'Poetry without Grammar' group. Like Howard, several of them had studied at South Kensington and were to be regular exhibitors at the Dudley. Bound together by an admiration for Burne-Jones which dated back to 1864 when he began exhibiting at the Old Watercolour Society, Crane later characterised the type of subjects favoured by the group as:

...a twilight world of dark mysterious woodlands, haunted streams, meads of deep green starred with burning flowers, veiled in a dim and mystic light.³⁹

Bateman's *The Dead Knight* (Private Collection) (fig. 18) and Crane's *The White Knight* (Private Collection) (fig. 19) are archetypal examples. As well as the pendant to *Emilia*, Bateman exhibited two landscapes at the Dudley in 1868, and Rosalind Howard recorded that her husband 'likes Bateman's things very much.'⁴⁰ If he were to succeed in rebuilding his confidence, Howard required the proximity of artists with whom there would be a greater parity than had been the case so far with either Burne-Jones or Legros. Costa was a world away from these dark winter days of trial and error, disconnected from Howard's endeavours. His influence over Howard had taken root during his trip to Italy in 1866, but was as yet too weak to withstand the distance between them, and as the months passed Howard nurtured a growing association with

³⁶ Henry Ellis Wooldridge (1845-1917), Edward Clifford (1844-1907) and Basil Champneys (1842-1935).

³⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/103/14. January 18th 1868

³⁸ It was Howard who effected Crane's introduction to Burne-Jones and Morris. Howard continued his association with Crane throughout his life, sharing a deep love of Italy with him and acquiring or commissioning several paintings by the artist. Crane was introduced to Costa by Leighton in 1872 and came under his influence, painting a number of Etruscan-esque landscapes. Howard was also to maintain contact with several other members of the Poetry without Grammar group.

³⁹ Crane, *Reminiscences*, p.84

⁴⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 14th 1868

the Poetry without Grammar group. Several members of the group were illustrators for the *People's Magazine*, which may account in part for the increased attention that Howard was now paying to etching. Howard's interest in printmaking techniques is indicated by his purchase of photographs of works by Dürer and Rembrandt, and his attendance at the sale of Marochetti's engravings at Colnaghi's, where he made an unspecified purchase.⁴¹

As 1869 began, it was dogged by continuing difficulties for Howard. He sent his *Oh don't deceive me* to one of the commercial galleries, but it failed to find a buyer. In addition to this, his efforts in etching did not progress as he must have wished; having prepared a drawing of Alderley Old Hall for an etching (fig. 20), he was forced to allow Legros to varnish his plates for him after having tried and failed himself. He remained cast in the role of pupil, but increasingly frustratedly so:

G tries to varnish some plates for etching but fails w[hi]ch provokes him.⁴²

It was at this juncture that Howard introduced his wife to George Eliot, with whom he had formed a friendship through the Burne-Joneses. Her keen insight into both the husband and wife's characters is very telling, although Rosalind's failure to assimilate her sagacity was to become evident all too soon thereafter:

She said George had such a noble beautiful good nature that I must never allow him to worry himself with anxiety about doing some great work in his life and succeeding in becoming very great in his art for she said the mere influence of his life especially in the high position he might some day have, would do good.⁴³

The opening months of 1869 were a harrowing time for Burne-Jones; by January he had decided that he could not leave his family for Maria Zambaco. Their notorious confrontation ensued, followed by his abortive attempt to flee to France, horrified at the idea of her attempting suicide in his name. He collapsed at Dover and returned to The Grange, more by force of circumstance than by choice, and remained secretly at home. In mid-February, Georgiana Burne-Jones went to Oxford with their children, Margaret

⁴¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. April 2nd 1868

⁴² Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. January 3rd 1869

⁴³ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. January 7th 1869

and Philip, and the Howards were free to talk to Burne-Jones at length. Rosalind Howard's journal records one such conversation:

...we argued...as to whether a man of genius was necessarily one-sided in his character or whether he might be perfect - for instance might not Mr Morris have warmer and more genial sympathy with other human beings - & need Mr Jones be weak - because he has a sensitive organisation - G & I combatted his theories of the impossibility of overcoming human nature. I am afraid we quite exhausted him.⁴⁴

The following day, perhaps prompted by the previous evening's taxing conversation, Burne-Jones confided more fully in Howard. His confession evidently left an indelible impression:

G went to dine with EBJ tonight...& stayed there until 1. They talked about this affair until he came away & G was made terribly sad by all EBJ said. When he came home he could not sleep for some hours.⁴⁵

Following that evening, Burne-Jones wrote to Howard, urging discretion:

...confer with nobody about what I spoke of last night, which must be a profound secret - I mean by nobody really nobody - do not speak to Webb or anyone about me, but say I am out of sorts and no more...for some time to come at least I mean to go nowhere but really shut myself up from everyone...I did not sleep at all in the night and tremble if a ring comes to the door. I am strictly burying myself from friends...I have written to the same effect to Morris, Webb, Rossetti and Howell. I hope they will not misunderstand - it is only until I feel a little better & that may soon be...burn this letter.⁴⁶

Howard was profoundly distressed by the turmoil which resulted from the affair.

To compound matters, Rosalind Howard's journal reveals her surfacing doubts in her husband's brittle powers of artistic expression, which arose as time passed and his progress faltered. She made comparisons between him and Legros, in relation to whom he inevitably emerged lacking:

Mr Colvin lunched here & walked with George & me to Legros...& we looked at the series of etching Legros and Holloway are going to publish. They are most masterly...I should not like George to work very much at etching it is so

⁴⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. February 14th 1869. Although this is an intriguing piece of reportage, one wonders how differently Howard would have summarised the conversation.

⁴⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/102/15. February 15th 1869

⁴⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. February 16th 1869. The Howards proved staunch allies to both Georgiana and Edward Burne-Jones in the aftermath of the above events, offering immeasurable support to both, until by 1874 Burne-Jones was at last able to write that he was now 'only heavy, dumpy and uncheerful'. Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated.

unwholesome & yet I wish he could etch like Legros...Legros' picture of the Baptism is nearly finished[;] it is very fine...G has worked at his Mantegna & made a mess with the gilding. ⁴⁷

She was scathing of Clifford, Crane and others working under the influence of Burne-Jones:

G & I...went to see the Dudley Gallery - not very interesting - a great deal by the so-called 'new school' or 'young men'[,] imitators of Jones - Bateman & Crane & Clifford - so full of sentiment but so deplorably exaggerated and out of drawing... ⁴⁸

Howard, nurturing an association with just these young men, had fallen into the dubious (as she saw it) company of Burne-Jones' acolytes. His increasing regard for Crane and Bateman (he purchased paintings by both artists⁴⁹ as well as by Clifford) must also have emphasised his apparent lack of personal ambition; why admire the disciples when one could seek to emulate the master ?

It cannot have failed to become apparent to Howard that Rosalind questioned his abilities, and in May 1869 the crisis ensued. Having previously exulted that he had gained the definitive status of a professional by virtue of his picture sales, Rosalind was now impatient for his career to take off, which it steadfastly refused to do. The following extract from her journal is given in its entirety, providing an invaluable insight into Howard's depression as he floundered, helplessly looking for a fresh direction in which he might finally excel, having manifestly failed to flourish in his attempts to emerge with an independent artistic voice following his tuition under Burne-Jones and Legros:

May 2nd: George walked...to see the Nortons.⁵⁰ Mr Norton argued with George about a man being an artist and said art was so dead now that nobody ought to become a painter...that Rossetti and Burne-Jones were our only two painters & that otherwise a man studying painting did it as a dilettante [sic] or self-indulgence - depressing sort of talk for G to hear.

⁴⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. January 30th 1869

⁴⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. February 4th 1869

⁴⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15: 'March 16th: G has bought for £12-12-0 that little picture by Crane of 'Hunting Morn'. He has been to look at it in this shop almost every day for some months & finding his wish to have it did not diminish he bought it.'

⁵⁰ Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908). Editor, author and Professor of the history of the fine arts at Harvard 1874-98 with a special interest in the study and translation of Dante. Norton and his wife were visiting Burne-Jones from Boston.

May 3rd: I feel very dejected & I am afraid I have dispirited poor George. It is about his art. He went to see his picture of the girl in the valley exhibited at Prince⁵¹ & he said it looked horridly bad there - I think he is getting on but I don't know that he will ever be a really first-rate painter & yet I see that he is becoming more entirely engrossed by painting. He thinks and talks of nothing else now. He seems to care less about politics - all the friends he seeks out & talks to if they are not artists are people who care to talk art. Now he has sometimes said that if in 5 years he did not find that he had a really good chance of becoming a great painter he would give it up but if his mind gets entirely filled and saturated with art pursuits his whole brain & character will get confirmed in one groove & how will he ever get out of it & take with interest & pleasure to the other employments of life? This is what distresses me, for if I hint at the study of some subject w[hi]ch will be useful & important to him in later life when he has estates he says it is uninteresting & has nothing to do with art & he must devote himself to one thing. How then will the interest and knowledge of other things come to him by & by when art may fail him & his position alters if he now persists in giving [it] all his time & thought...& now I am disappointed because we are so much the creatures of habit that I think what he devotes himself to now seems likely to subjugate his whole soul. It is a perplexing question & I am not very hopeful about results. He has not any inventive genius & can one be a great painter without that[?] I am not personally ambitious for him honestly & truly I have no vainglorious desire about him - but I do long for him to do some good useful work during his life - self development is not enough. ⁵²

Howard's passion for painting was evidently all-absorbing. His tenacity to this vocation was to continue throughout his life, undermined to varying degrees by politics, official responsibilities or the weight of domestic unhappiness. Rosalind's concerns about how he was later to manage the Naworth and Castle Howard estates on his accession to the Earldom were later resolved in a most unconventional manner when she undertook to administer them herself, which she did with the unerring loyalty and assistance of her agent Lief Jones, referred to scathingly by Blanche Airlie as 'Tea Leaf Jones'.

The Howards spent the summer of 1869 at Naworth, where Howard pursued his habitual routine of drawing or painting daily, working increasingly at family portraits. These were unambitious works and were, in effect, mere visual keepsakes (figs 21 and 21a). In the group portrait of his family at breakfast, Howard places himself apart from the family group, a diffident figure whom Rosalind sits with her back to. Whilst the others are all absorbed in their own activities, Howard gazes out uncertainly at the viewer, as if in search of the reassurance which her stance suggests is withheld by her. However,

⁵¹ The picture dealer who had offered to exhibit Howard's *Oh don't deceive me*.

⁵² Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/15. May 3rd 1869

there was some comfort to be drawn from Sidney Colvin's high opinion of Howard's sketch of boats at Littlehampton, which Howard gave to him as a result.

On their return to London there was much to be done acquiring furnishings for Palace Green,⁵³ which was being built for them to a design by Philip Webb. This preoccupation renders Rosalind Howard's journal entries over the succeeding three years, which are largely devoted to domestic matters, rather less illuminating as to her husband's progress and state of mind, and any evaluation must principally be formed from Howard's erratic exhibiting record, his illustrative work and other correspondence.

Howard and illustration

The People's Magazine

From 1871 Howard joined the swelling ranks of artists executing illustrative work for periodicals and literary magazines. The publication of *Once A Week* in 1859, the first of the literary magazines to place a greater emphasis on illustration, had attracted the talents of Millais, Frederick Walker (1840-1875), George Pinwell (1842-1875) and Charles Keene (1823-1891). *Once A Week* was followed in 1860 by *Good Words* and *The Cornhill*, which 'did more for the art of wood-engraved literature than any other Sixties School publication',⁵⁴ its first number selling 120,000 copies. During the 1860s several other periodicals came into being, one of which, in 1867, was *The People's Magazine*. It was published under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and was comprised of a wholesome mix of episodic fiction, instructional articles, poetry and commentaries on paintings. During the first few years of its publication, though liberally sprinkled with illustrations, the artists who had designed them were not named. From 1872 illustrations were allocated their own index and by 1873, ironically its final year of publication, there were alphabetical indices of both contributors and illustrators, indicating an elevation in the latter's status.

Members of the Poetry without Grammar group illustrated poetical contributions, most

⁵³ The background to the commission, and the building and furnishing of the house itself will be examined separately.

⁵⁴ Engen, *Pre-Raphaelite Prints*, p.88

notably those by Benjamin Montgomerie Ranking (figs 22 & 23). Isobel Spencer observes that:

They even had their one poet, Montgomerie Ranking, whose verse appears in the Dudley catalogue of 1866 accompanying a picture by Robert Bateman, an artist considered by Crane to be the leader of the group.⁵⁵

Ranking was a poet who, like the young artists who illustrated his work, was preoccupied with an ethereal other-worldliness, medievalism and neo-classicism. In 1871 he edited an abridged edition of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and was the author of *Streams from Hidden Sources* and various other volumes of poetry. Not for them the grim reality of a modern age. Whether by image or words, their vocabulary was the same; mysticism and historicism. All the more marked, then, appears Howard's association with the group. Both its concerns and imagery undermined those precepts which Legros had so recently instilled: realism was usurped by sentiment and religiosity by the fervour of emotion.

In 1872 Howard illustrated two poems in *The People's Magazine*: the first was Ranking's poem *Hillside Sonnets* (fig. 24) in the July issue, the second being a poem by Charles Holroyd, *The Legend of the Pagan Painter* in the September issue.⁵⁶ Here was a means of expression to which Howard found himself ideally suited. For *Hillside Sonnets* he chose a literal interpretation of the extended simile at the heart of the verse by contrasting the parched and glassy lake, emblematic of an accepting and unperturbed state of being, with the surging waters of tempestuous awakenings. The upper image encompasses the first four lines: heat is expressed by the parched shoreline, solitude by the wall of distant fells enclosing the scene, and its perfect stillness is emphasised by the flight of a lone heron. In the lower image the reeds are crushed and flailing, vegetation clings to the streaming hillsides, the foreground boulders lie submerged beneath the surging waters and a bank of cloud obscures the fells beyond. A flight of ducks or geese leave the lake for calmer waters elsewhere.

⁵⁵ Spencer, *Walter Crane*, pp.65-66

⁵⁶ Rosalind Howard's account book for 1872 records: 'Cash received: For 2 woodcuts in the Peoples Magazine...July 'Hill side Sonnets' £5-0-0...Oct Wood-cut of the Pagan Painter' £7-10-0. Castle Howard Archive, J23/105

Howard's illustration to *The Legend of the Pagan Painter* (fig. 25) shows the eponymous young artist seated in an interior shaded from the glaring sun outside, where a clamouring throng led by Roman soldiers jostle a condemned Christian girl through the town square to her place of execution. He gazes down upon the scene, poised to return to his painting with renewed purpose. The illustration expresses the tumult and heat well, but something of the poem's intensity is lost, perhaps because neither the martyred woman nor the divine female figure in the pagan artist's painting are left to the reader's imagination but are instead juxtaposed somewhat pedantically.

The following year Howard illustrated a third poem: *The Midnight Funeral Across the River* by C.H. Harbord, which appeared in the January issue (fig. 26).⁵⁷ This is perhaps the most successful of his magazine illustrations. A barge-like craft is rowed along a wide and softly-flowing stream, its near bank fringed with reeds, the far bank partially obscured by a light mist upon the waters. Beside the coffin borne by the boat stand two ranks of hooded figures, each bearing a flaming torch from which rippling plumes of glowing smoke and sparks arise. Neither the boat nor the garb of the figures are anchored in any specific historical period; the overriding impression is one of mystic ritual.

For the March 1873 issue Howard executed a series of designs for illustrations to an article by Stopford Brooke entitled *Lanercost*. These included two architectural details (figs 27 & 28) and *Lanercost Priory from the Irthing (Castle Howard Collection)* (fig. 29). Evidently Howard was unhappy with the quality of the engravings taken from his drawings. Walter Crane, writing to Howard from Capri, referred to his predicament:

Engravers are indeed most trying persons...The kind of thing you complain of is very disgusting, but taste is, I fear, rare among them.⁵⁸

However, when one compares the latter illustration as it appeared in *People's Magazine* with the drawing (fig. 30) there appears to have been little licence taken, perhaps

⁵⁷ Rosalind Howard's account book for 1873 records the payment for this: 'Received: Dec 25 Paid for a wood-cut of 'Funeral on the River' by GH for the Peoples Mag £4-0-0' Castle Howard Archive J23/105. There is no mention of payment received for his series of illustrations for Stopford Brooke's article on Lanercost included in the March issue.

⁵⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. August 6th 1872

indicating that the engraving had been amended.

Further illustrative work:

Carlyle's Early Life by J.A. Froude

Howard illustrated J.A. Froude's *Carlyle's Early Life*, published in 1882, for which he executed four drawings: *Craigenputtock*, *Ecclefechan*, *Mainhill* and *Scotsbrigg*.

Froude's biography was a work of great significance, though of equal controversy, and remains the departure point for students of Carlyle. Froude had first met the Carlyles in 1849 when he was introduced to them by John Spedding during a visit to Cheyne Row. Following his move to London in 1860 they became intimately acquainted, and after Jane Carlyle's death in 1866 he devoted ever more time to Carlyle.

Howard's association with Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) had been a lengthy one too. He had grown up with a decided admiration for Carlyle's writings⁵⁹ and a closer association had been made possible because of the Carlyles' links with the Stanleys which stretched back to the days of Rosalind's childhood. As a young woman, Rosalind's elder sister Blanche had been a close friend of Jane Carlyle (1801-1866), their friendship remaining steadfast until the latter's death. As she was to do on so many occasions, Blanche acted as intermediary for the introduction to Howard. Along with Tennyson, Browning and other great men of letters, Carlyle was a sometime frequenter of Palace Green in its early days.

Froude's association with Howard stretched back to his undergraduate days; he struck up a lasting acquaintance with the young George Howard on occasions when both enjoyed the Kingsleys' hospitality. Froude also paid a visit to the newlyweds at Naworth in 1865. By 1876, Froude was already working on Carlyle's biography, and during another visit to Naworth he and Howard visited Ecclefechan, the village of Carlyle's birth. A further expedition was made to the vicinity in 1880, when sketches for the illustrations of Ecclefechan, Mainhill and Craigenputtock were made. Froude recalled the day:

⁵⁹ Amongst the writings marked out for praise in Howard's commonplace book was Carlyle's challenging and original work of the 1830s, *Sartor Resartus*. Interestingly, Howard also recorded having read Froude during the same year. Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/2

We made our Ecclefechan expedition yesterday with great success...We saw the house where Carlyle was born, the farm in the hills where he was bred up, the other farm to which his father and mother removed in 1826, and where they both died. Mr Howard made three sketches. ⁶⁰

There are distinct differences between Howard's drawings and the illustrations as they appeared in *Carlyle's Early Life*. The subjects were drawn relatively lightly and are suffused with an integral elegance. In his drawing for *Craigenputtock* (fig. 31) the slender trees, iron railings and panoramic format all combine to produce an effect of gentility; one could assume that the house is approached across landscaped parkland. The illustration, in contrast, evokes an impression of harshness by throwing the foreground into deep shadow, creating a canopy of foliage from the trees and placing greater emphasis on the fir tree beside the house and the wooded hillside beyond (fig. 32). The left-hand portion of Howard's drawing is eliminated completely. The effect is altogether more bracing, and even the three tiny figures appear more 'hearty' than those in Howard's drawing. In spirit, the etching is more akin to the Craigenputtock described by Froude as 'gaunt, grim, comfortless and utterly solitary'.⁶¹ Likewise, the main street of Ecclefechan as drawn by Howard (fig. 33) appears infinitely more genteel than that of the illustration (fig. 34). In the latter the sweep of the road is less pronounced, the stream running through the village is depicted more as a convenient ditch than a pleasant waterway, and the road is muddy and utilitarian. The drawings were etched by C.W. Sherborn.⁶² Howard, in correspondence to his wife, reported visiting him in company with Froude:

I...walked with him [Froude] to Sherbourne [sic] where I spent some time in drawing on the proofs of his etchings from my sketches. I am not quite satisfied but he will I hope get them right. ⁶³

It would appear that he was indeed satisfied with the end result; Sherborn was called

⁶⁰ Letter to Margaret Froude dated October 26th 1880, in Dunn, *Froude and Carlyle*; p.245

⁶¹ Froude, *Carlyle's Early Life*, I, p.446

⁶² Charles William Sherborn (1831-1912). Working originally as a silver plate engraver, Sherborn only devoted himself to etching and engraving illustrative work after 1872.

⁶³ Castle Howard Archive J22/5. February 24th 1882

upon again in 1883 when he was asked to engrave a bookplate for the Howards, and to execute a copy of an unspecified work by Giorgione. In 1893 Howard recommended that Sherborn be employed to etch his portrait by Henry Wells (1828-1903) (fig. 35), opining that he 'is a real artist and deserves encouragement.'⁶⁴

English Illustrated Magazine 1885

Howard made a brief return to illustrative work when he designed six illustrations for an article by M. Creighton about the history of Naworth Castle, which appeared in the February issue of the *English Illustrated Magazine* (figs 36 & 37). Crane mentions the commission in correspondence, in which he also refers to some of the technological advances taking place at the time:

I am interested to hear you are doing a set of drawings of Naworth for the *New Magazine* ⁶⁵...no-one does Naworth more faithfully and characteristically [than you] and no-one has a better right. I always make my drawings for wood on white card to be photographed using black drawing ink & quill pen - now-a-days the original is thus preserved, and you can get it back again. ⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Letter dated Easter Monday 1893. Sherborn was to be paid £40.

⁶⁵ Crane was mistaken when he referred to the *New Magazine*. Howard's drawings for the Naworth article in the *English Illustrated Magazine* were engraved by J.D. Cooper.

⁶⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. September 2nd 1883

CHAPTER 4

Landscape, Costa and Italy

There was little novelty in the lure of Italy for British landscape painters during the nineteenth century. Noteworthy, however, was the fusion between crosscurrents of British and Italian art which began with Charles Coleman (c.1807-1874) and continued with Giovanni Costa's association with George Heming Mason (1818-1872)¹ and Frederic Leighton during the 1850s. This was augmented by the formalisation of the Etruscan School three decades later. Its significance lay in the break with the Ruskinian approach which had so dominated English landscape painting in the intervening years.

Costa's long-term associations with both British and French artists from the early stages of his career reflected his precocious disillusionment with, and consequent alienation from, the overriding commercialism of Italian painting during the mid-nineteenth century. He sought a purer form of expression, with that empathetic contemplation of landscape at its core which inevitably resulted in a certain insularity. As his career progressed, however, Costa's crusading instinct and fearless innovation led him to be instrumental in the reassessment and re-alignment of Italian art. His effect on the younger generation of fellow-Italian artists was profound; from 1859, Costa's *effet*-orientated technique was the eponymous characteristic in the art of the Macchiaioli. When he had come into contact with the circle of artists who gathered at the Caffè Michelangelo in Florence, he had urged them to 'look the sun full in the face.'² His convictions had a decisive effect and led in part to the Macchiaioli practice of adopting dramatic *chiaroscuro* effects.³ A

¹ Mason trained as a medical practitioner but decided to become a painter in 1842, when he travelled to Rome.

² Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.91

³ Despite his influence on the group, there were some fundamental points of difference between Costa and the Macchiaioli. They believed that truth was the key: either beauty or ugliness were worthy of depiction, if undertaken with sincerity and honesty. Costa's belief, in contrast, was that art's duty was to convey an ennobling and refining impression; he 'did not consider that this required of the artist to choose ugliness or vulgarity in preference to beauty, or equally with it. Both are true, with this difference - the one is artistic and deserving of being immortalised by art, the other is not.' Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.94

leading Macchiaolo, Telemaco Signorini (1835-1901), described this guiding principle:

The macchia was...an accentuation of chiaroscuro in painting: a way of freeing oneself from the basic fault of the old school, which by excessive transparency of form sacrificed the solidity and sense of perspective in the painting.⁴

Their work was often characterised by bold brushstrokes expressive of the flattening effects of bright sunlight and deep shadow (figs 38 & 39). Giovanni Fattori (1825-1908), another principal member of the group, was later to acknowledge his indebtedness to Costa, whom he considered to have been his artistic guide. Costa's influence would extend further as the years passed. He founded The Gold Club⁵ in 1875 and in 1886, along with Italian and international colleagues, he founded In Arte Libertas, an exhibiting body which combined his dual watchwords, Art and Liberty. It became a forum for progressive artists of all nationalities, staging in 1887 an exhibition at Earl's Court where the symbolists Giulio Aristide Sartorio (1860-1932) and Giovanni Segantini (1858-1899) had their first British showing. In its 1890 Rome exhibition, In Arte Libertas united the work of artists as disparate as Watts, Corot, Puvis de Chavannes and Sargent as well as the Etruscan School⁶ and Burne-Jones. It continued as an exhibition body until 1902, but came to an end when Costa died the following year.

Giovanni Costa was born on 15th October 1826, one of a family of sixteen children living in the Trastevere district of Rome. At the age of twelve he entered a college run by priests at Montefiascone, remaining there for five years. It was to the dramatic landscape surrounding the little hilltop town that Olivia Rossetti Agresti, Costa's biographer, attributed his appreciation of nature:

The collegians...used daily to take long walks in the country, and the splendid scenery by which he was here surrounded first inspired Costa with his love of nature, whilst the constant study of Virgil and Theocritus taught him to see landscape in a special way and it was here that he first began to make pen and

⁴ Clifford, *The Macchiaioli*, p.35

⁵ An association of artists of all nationalities living in Rome. Its prime purpose was to promote painting from nature.

⁶ Of the English members of the *scuola*, Howard and Edith and Matthew Ridley Corbet showed at the 1890 Rome exhibition.

pencil drawings from nature.⁷

From these years Costa also derived the deep patriotism and republican convictions which were to lead him to take up arms in 1848. He returned to Rome in 1843, aged seventeen, and entered another institution run by priests, the Bandinelli College. Here he began to study drawing in earnest under his teacher Durantini, and it became evident that he foresaw for himself a career in art. Despite the disapproval of his elder brothers (his father had died in 1842), in 1845 Costa entered the studio of the portrait and history painter Baron Vincenzo Camuccini, who had been the first to encourage him in his artistic efforts as a boy. However, he did not remain with Camuccini for long, moving on to the Academy in Rome where his masters included Francesco Coghetti (1802-1875) and Francesco Podesti (1800-1895). By 1847 Costa had decided that he was equally at odds with their precepts and abandoned formal tuition altogether, concluding that the only logical course open to him was to study directly from nature. He buried himself deep in the countryside, embarking on a series of studies to which he was to return several years later. This short period of activity was brought abruptly to an end when the Italian Unity War intervened; Costa took up arms and fought with Garibaldi during the siege of Rome. Following the fall of the city in 1849 he was accused of sedition and retreated to Ariccia. Here he immersed himself in nature once more. Costa painted his first major work between 1850 and 1852, *Women Loading Wood on Boats at Porte d'Anzio* (National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome) (fig. 40). It was a characteristic work, a contemporaneous fusion of landscape and tradition, being neither historical nor narrative yet retaining an archaic resonance.

By 1850 the Roman *campagna* had become a magnet for artists of all nationalities and at Ariccia's Pension Martorelli Costa encountered, amongst others, Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869) and Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901). In 1852 he met George Heming Mason, with whom he forged a deep and lasting friendship.⁸ The two exercised a reciprocal influence upon each other's work, but both were indebted principally to

⁷ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.8

⁸ see Reynolds, 'George Heming Mason and the Idealised Landscape' (*Apollo*, CXIII, no. 228 (1981), pp. 106-9)

Charles Coleman, the 'father of the Campagna Romana school', as they reverentially christened him. He more than any other figure was the greatest governing factor in Costa's artistic development. Coleman had travelled to Rome in around 1831 and had been living and working in the *campagna* in almost total seclusion for many years when Costa and Mason met him:

He had been attracted to the area by the wild and sweeping expanses of the landscape and by the rugged simplicity that characterised the lives of the people who inhabited the region...Coleman approached these subjects directly and truthfully, with none of the customary artifice of classical convention or romantic sentimentalism, and his devotion to sincere observation had a great impact on the early development of both Costa and Mason.⁹

Costa's belief duly crystallised that only with the sincerity attained through such a complete immersion in nature could Italian landscape painting be ennobled, and the primacy of its sincere and detailed study was confirmed as the bedrock of his *oeuvre*. It was this intimacy with locality that was to form the basis of Costa's future teachings.

In 1853 Costa met the youthful and brilliant Frederic Leighton, and along with Mason the three forged a close alliance. Mason remained with Costa for a further five years and the seeds of the 'Etruscan' style were sown. In 1858 Mason returned to England, taking up residence at Wetley Abbey.¹⁰ The sudden contrast of the Staffordshire climate and landscape undermined his constitution and resulted in ill-health which prompted periods of depression and lassitude. Both Costa and Leighton visited him over the coming years, offering financial assistance and encouragement.¹¹ Inspiration returned when, prompted by Leighton and Costa, Mason began to recognise in the Black Country landscape its sonorous mystery; he exhibited his arcadian paintings of the locality annually from 1861 until his death.

In 1865 Mason and his family moved to Hammersmith, and although there is no

⁹ Broude, *The Macchiaioli*, p.84

¹⁰ Mason had become engaged to Mary Emma Wood, whom he had met in Paris in 1855.

¹¹ During one such visit in 1863 Costa painted *An Idyll in the Black Country*, which was later purchased by Howard.

evidence to suggest that the two knew each other,¹² Howard registered his admiration for Mason's work after seeing one of his paintings at the Wyndhams'¹³ home in Belgrave Square:

G went to Mrs Wyndham after dinner and saw Mason's picture which she has bought - he likes it very much.¹⁴

Madeline Wyndham was also to purchase Costa's *Women Stealing Wood on the Shore near Ardea on an Evening when the Libeccio blows*, painted from studies made during a sketching expedition undertaken by Mason and Costa in 1853, and completed in 1874.¹⁵ *They Sleep by Day to Work by Night* (Private Collection), Costa's painting of weary fishermen, had resulted from the same expedition and was to be his first sale; it was purchased by Leighton in 1857. From this date Costa became a regular exhibitor in England, initially at the Royal Academy and subsequently at the Grosvenor and New Galleries.

1859 saw fresh hostilities erupt in Italy, and Costa took up arms for a second time, enrolling in the Piedmontese army which was stationed at Turin.

With order restored after the signing of the Treaty of Villafranca, Costa planned to return to Rome via Milan and Florence, but Tuscany cast its spell on him and he was to remain there for the next ten years. He made an initial sketching expedition during which he stayed at Gombo, near Pisa, where he made his first studies for *Il Fiume Morto* (fig. 41)

¹² It is curious that Howard and Mason were unacquainted; as the years passed they had many mutual friends and acquaintances in common. Indeed, William Blake Richmond was to write: 'We were lucky to have George Mason so near...also Leighton, Watts and Val Prinsep were not far off.' Richmond quoted by Billingham, *George Heming Mason* (Exh., Stoke), 1982, unpaginated

¹³ Howard was a frequent visitor to Percy and Madeline Wyndham's London home and Petworth House in Sussex. Conspicuously artistic, the family was at the very heart of The Souls, that tight-knit web of aesthetic aristocrats for whom beauty ruled supreme. G.F. Watts painted a magnificent portrait of Madeline which was exhibited at the inaugural exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877; she later studied enamelling under Alexander Fisher. The Wyndhams commissioned Philip Webb to build their country house, Clouds, in 1881.

¹⁴ Castle Howard Archive J23/102/14, March 31st 1868.

¹⁵ Howard was later to acquire this work himself. He lent it for exhibition at the inaugural Grosvenor Gallery exhibition in 1877. As had been the case with Legros, Howard was to accumulate one of the principal collections of Costa's work.

(Fondazione Cassa dei Risparmi di Forti S.P.A.),¹⁶ one of his principal paintings, and one at which he worked intermittently for the next three decades. Howard was to paint the same location over thirty years later, a work entitled *The Edge of the Pine Forest, Pisa* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig. 42), which is imbued with the same heavy breathlessness as Costa's painting. Howard exhibited it at the New Gallery in 1891. Having crossed the River Arno for the first time, Costa went as far as Bocca d'Arno and found himself enthralled by the wild and isolated scenery. This location, which lay near the mouth of the river, was to become the archetype for the landscapes depicted by the Etruscan school, and was painted by every member of the *scuola*. Agresti describes it as:

...then a very wild and uninhabited spot...The grand and rugged lines of the distant Carrara mountains, with their marvellous colour effects; the sandy, broken sea-coast, so characteristic of many of his foregrounds, with the pine woods coming down almost to the water's edge...the wide stretch of river slowly flowing to the sea, wonderful at dawn and evening...¹⁷

From 1885 Costa owned a house at Bocca d'Arno, annually spending the summer and autumn there, often playing host to fellow artists:

Because of Costa's presence there the countryside within walking distance of the mouth of the River Arno, and the distant views of the Carrara Mountains and Pisan Hills became the central motif of late Etruscan painting, and the hybrid verb 'boccadarneggiare' - to stay at Bocca d'Arno with Costa - entered the language of painters.¹⁸

Howard was a regular guest.

By 1862 Costa felt the need to travel further afield and to renew the links he had made with the painters he had met during his days at Ariccia. He set out for Paris to exhibit at the Salon of 1862. Not only was the painting he showed there, *Women loading Wood on Boats at Port d'Anzio* (painted in 1856 and first exhibited at Rome), received with much acclamation from fellow artists, but the *Study of Olive Trees*, which he showed at the Salon des Refuses, was hung beside Whistler's *White Girl* and found an immediate

¹⁶ The painting was purchased by Howard in 1884 for £120.

¹⁷ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.87

¹⁸ Newall, *The Etruscans*, p.38

buyer.¹⁹ Costa's studies from nature came as a revelation to his French colleagues, presenting as they did such a marked contrast to the style which had characterised the public face of the Italian section at the 1862 International Exhibition. He was held in high esteem and the visit resulted in closer links, particularly with Corot and Decamps. Costa remained in Paris for several months before making a brief visit to London where Leighton introduced him to G.F. Watts and Burne-Jones.²⁰ He returned to England again during the summer of 1863, when he stayed with George Heming Mason. He travelled back to Florence via the forest of Fontainebleau, his curiosity to observe at first-hand the countryside skirting Paris having first been aroused by Corot and the Barbizon school. By 1864 he was back in Florence, but with the politics of patriotism once more to the fore, he was called to Rome where he worked with equal vigour as both conspirator and artist.²¹

George Howard and Giovanni Costa

In December 1865 Howard travelled to Italy, a practice he maintained almost annually until the 1880s. From the outset of the trip he devoted himself to a rigorous course of study. In Rome, the meeting took place which in the magnitude of its repercussions for Howard is comparable only to that with Burne-Jones. He met Giovanni Costa for the first time, visiting his studio in the Via Margutta on the recommendation of Marcato,²² with whom he had struck up an acquaintance at Florence's Pitti Gallery whilst copying

¹⁹ Costa had exhibited his study of tree trunks at the annual show held by the Societa Promotrice delle Belle Arti at Florence, where it had been scathingly received by the critics. Agresti writes that 'it was merely scoffed at except by the elect few; and one critic...dismissed its author with this uncompromising judgment: "A certain Costa exhibits two stove pipes."' Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.95

²⁰ Costa was later recorded as pronouncing that 'Burne-Jones he could genuinely admire, but his mannerisms and defective drawing somewhat irritated him.' Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.177

²¹ Costa's career was interrupted numerous times by political activity, and it has been said of him that he was as much of a statesman as an artist. His obituary in *The Times* (3rd February 1903) referred to him as '...a figure which ever stood out in protest against insincerity in art and politics.'

²² Marcato (dates unknown) was recalled by Costa as being 'a political refugee from Venice, a modest and conscientious artist, a great lover of art and the homeland' (Costa, *Quel che vidi e quel che intesi*, p.228). The acquaintance was maintained when Marcato came to England, when Howard took Burne-Jones to see him working in distemper.

Giorgione's *Il Concerto*. In his autobiographical writings Costa vividly recalled the meeting, during which the Howards appear to have charmed him with their youth and enthusiasm in much the same way that they had disarmed the Burne-Joneses:

‘On a pleasant afternoon in the winter of 1865/6 I was in my studio intending to paint, when I heard knocking at my door. I opened it and found in front of me a young, newly-married couple, who at once appeared to me to be English...They asked to see my painting, and I immediately took a liking to them...They considered my picture with understanding and the husband confided to me that he also was a painter...In spite of having no title to his name, and their simplicity, they appeared to me to be a noble couple *in cognito*. This Mr Howard with his courteous companion were to become the very best, most affectionate friends in my life; a strong anchor of reliable, steadfast friendship, becoming more dear with many shared memories for around thirty-five years.’²³

Costa returned the call the following day, before Howard left Rome for Naples and Capri. Agresti confirms that the resulting relationship was ‘one of the great friendships’ of his life:

‘...from that time to his death they remained fast friends, knit together by a mutual admiration and by their art. Mr Howard was so greatly struck by Costa’s work that he, himself an artist, wished to study under him; and it was Costa who first induced him to paint in oils, forbidding him in his capacity of master to work in watercolours for some time, as he considered the facility of the medium harmful to young artists.’²⁴

The Howards’ elevated social standing came as an apparent revelation to Costa when he visited England a few years later, to find that their ‘house in the country was a lavish castle with all the comfort and luxury of a princely residence.’²⁵ He marvelled at Howard’s constancy, declaring that in him, nobility of heart was joined with nobility of blood.²⁶

As the six-month long 1865/6 trip unfolded, Howard made countless copies and

²³ Costa, *Quel che vidi e quel che intesi*, p.225

²⁴ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.127. Contrary to Agresti’s statement, Howard continued to be more emphatically influenced by Burne-Jones and subsequently Legros for several years to come, and it was the latter who taught him to handle oils following a rudimentary lesson from Hamilton Wild on his return from Italy in June 1866. Nor did Howard ever work exclusively in oil. It may not be coincidental, however, that Howard’s decision to initiate tuition in oils was taken at the time he met Costa.

²⁵ Costa, *Quel che vidi e quel che intesi*, p.226

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.232

sketches, lengthy days being filled with exhaustive study. Rosalind Howard recorded their crammed itinerary in her journal:

March 9th: ...went to S Maria Maggiore & San Gregorio to see the Guido Domenichino fresco.

10th: to Sciarra Gallery

13th: ...went to the Vatican - saw the Stanzi di Raphael - the 'Conversion of Paul' the Aldobrandine Mascagni & the Fra Angelicos. G went to Story's studio afterwards.

23rd [on arriving at Spoleto] ..went to see the Lippo Lippi in the Duomo then to the Citadel & aquaduct - there [George] made a sketch...then drove to Spello to see the frescoes of Pinturicchio there. ²⁷

On his return to Rome in March, Howard spent several days with Costa at his studio and purchased the first of many of his paintings, recorded in Rosalind Howard's journal only as a sketch. Howard suffered a brief illness, and convalesced with the Storys before embarking on another round of gruelling activity:

29th: [at Siena]...cathedral - studied the Pinturicchios...G to Story's studio.

30th: We went to the Cathedral - studied the Duccios...then to the Siena Academy & all the churches.

31st: [at Poggibonsi]...saw fresco by Lippo Memmi in the Pieve...frescoes by Ghirlandaio of S Fina, S Augustino frescoes of Gozzoli...[George] sketched after luncheon. Then by rail to Florence.

April 2nd: We walked up to S Miniato...G made a sketch of a cypress.

3rd: We spent the morning at the Pitti looking at the pictures with Marcato.

5th: [George] went in the morning to the Bargello to finish copying the cassone.

6th: Bought some photos from drawings. Paid a visit to Browning.

7th: ...went to Casa G'iori [sic] to draw a picture...of the fountain there.

8th: Boboli Gardens...G drew there. ²⁸

Howard studied the architecture of several buildings in minute detail, including the facade of St Petronio in Bologna, and in Venice, the capitals and upper arcade of the Ducal Palace (a building referred to by Philip Webb during his visit there in 1884 as one of the 'greater and more terribly lovely' buildings of Venice²⁹) and a 'dyer's door',³⁰ a drawing of which Howard took two days to complete. His deep interest in architecture continued undiminished throughout his life, and is evident in his studies and paintings of

²⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.184

³⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12. May 3rd 1866

the towns and cities that he visited over the years (figs 43 to 45a).

There are indications that during the latter part of this 1865/6 tour the foundation of Costa's influence was subtly being laid, for Howard's copies from the Italian masters were now liberally interspersed with topographical subjects. He made *plein air* studies at San Giorgio for a 'sunset view',³¹ as well as sketching in the lagoons at Venice (a location to which he would return many times), the bridge at San Fosca, and a well in the orchard of the Arena chapel near the Eremitani church in Padua (Private Collection) (fig. 46). At Genoa he painted a view of the harbour from the sixth floor window of the hotel (fig. 47), and at Pisa the tower at Ponte al Mare (fig. 47a). However, Costa's influence was not to be felt more fully for some time to come. The following four years, examined in the previous section of this thesis, amounted to a process of anticipation, application and anti-climax until by the end of the 1860s a cyclical pattern had emerged of study, disenchantment and altered direction.

In 1866 Costa was introduced by Leighton to William Blake Richmond, who during the coming years was also to become associated with the Etruscan school. Richmond was later to recall the meeting:

Leighton introduced me to his companion, and I saw at once that I had met a friend in the great patriot and painter - which shall I place first? for the two were so interwoven in Costa's strong, virile Etruscan character that each reacted upon the other, making up the man of whom Leighton justly said that he was an artist in a hundred and a man in a thousand.³²

Costa's painting made a revelatory impact on Richmond. He later remembered the contents of the studio at Via Margutta thus:

On various easels were pictures which I shall never forget; they were and are quite unlike any others that I have seen. Big in design like Greek bas-reliefs; full of a strange atmosphere. They united a system of lines with an appreciation of planes...It was a new revelation of nature to me - it was broad and simple yet full of detail...I went back to my studio another man...Costa's inspiration was so real - not in the modern realistic sense but in the ideal; it had something prehistoric yet modern, large and manly.³³

³¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/12. April 28th 1866

³² Stirling, *The Richmond Papers*, p.206

³³ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, pp.130-131

Richmond's association with him was to endorse Costa's influence over Howard, who became a frequent visitor to Richmond's home at Beavor Lodge from the mid-1870s. By 1870, as has been noted, Howard was once again casting about for an anchor. Having turned away from the intervention of Legros, which he had ceased to find constructive, he experienced a period of turmoil during which he aligned himself with the Poetry without Grammar group and executed illustrative work. With hindsight it is unsurprising that he should ultimately turn to Costa, whose *oeuvre* stood outside British schools and influence. Increasingly, Howard regarded the periods that he spent in Italy as havens of positive activity unclouded by comparison, criticism and the harrassing distractions of life in England. He harboured a desire for an Italian residence, a wish which, however, never reached fruition despite his efforts to negotiate the purchase of a property in 1875, and again six years later. Howard was particularly sensitive to climate, and the heat and light of Italy acted as a panacea. Rosalind Howard was later to record the revivifying effect that the country had upon him, when she observed that 'George...only begins to be truly alive when he feels the warm Italian air...' ³⁴ Indeed Howard, who was addressed by William Blake Richmond as 'Signor Giorgio', became synonymous with Italy to those who knew him:

He was a born lover of Italy and things Italian. Nature had even modified towards the Italian his strongly marked hereditary Howard type of countenance, and in Tuscany, where the features of the people generally are apt to bear a special stamp of race and finish, I have often enough observed to myself in driving through some provincial market town, "Why, here is a whole population of George Howards." ³⁵

I have seen and heard and experienced things which the uncritical would call remarkable and the philosopher could moralize upon. There is a walk, for instance, in Magdalen with Mrs Lewes...There is a midnight smoking dialogue with George Howard about art and Italy. ³⁶

Howard's pleasure in the Italian landscape, with which his annual visits allowed him to build a grateful intimacy, urged him to formulate an expression of his affection for the

³⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/103/20. October 21st 1883

³⁵ Colvin, *Memories and Notes*, pp.77-8

³⁶ Jacks (ed.), *Letters of John Addington Symonds*, II, p417. Letter 1006. To Henry Graham Dakyns, May 31st 1876

country. He was being subliminally primed for the transference to Costa's philosophy. 1871 was a key transitional year for Howard, during which the balance of his creative allegiance shifted emphatically towards Costa. He studied intensively during an extended tour of Italy's northern and central provinces. He used Crowe & Cavalcaselle, referred to by Rossetti as 'the worst of writers and the most valuable of authorities',³⁷ as his guides,³⁸ passing through numerous towns from Belluno, through Bassano in the north-east of the country to Foligno in Umbria before returning north to Padua. He sketched constantly and made extensive notes on paintings, frescoes, sculpture and architecture which are crucial in providing an insight into this transitional period, revealing a renewed sense of discipline in their minute level of observation. Howard focused keenly on the landscape elements of what he saw, revealing Costa's strengthening influence. Extracts from these illuminating notes³⁹ have been quoted at length below. At Trent he made the following observation:

The fronts of [the] palaces still have many of their street faces covered with frescoes...Opposite the post house stables there are some frescoes - much ruined but suggesting an interior with Bellinesque figures sitting at table. Through the windows there is a gorgeous sunset scene with bars of rose and purple cloud.⁴⁰

In Asolo he described the predella beneath the altarpiece of the Duomo:

...a predella, with long landscape of mountains and the chancel of the nave in front painted in a bluish colour but giving an impression of the great and gloomy character of the hills.⁴¹

In the Duomo at Castel Franco:

³⁷ Bryson, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Jane Morris; Their Correspondence*, p.95. Letter 59, dated June 5th 1879

³⁸ Crowe, J.A. and Cavalcaselle, G.B., *A History of Painting in Italy*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1864). This was the standard survey of central Italian painting for the English-speaking reader of the time. It was reprinted several times, remaining a key work on the subject well into the twentieth century.

³⁹ The manuscript volume 'Notes on Pictures seen in Italy 1871'. Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/5

⁴⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/5

⁴¹ Ibid.

...a picture of Giorgione's - the most beautiful I have ever seen attributed to him...the Madonna, St Francis and St Liberale...The landscape is perfect - the sea and a hilly upland. A walled town or castle in the purity and glow of the sky and luminousness of the light clouds I am reminded (to compare big things to the smaller) of Cuyp and Claude. ⁴²

At Vicenza he was greatly struck by an Entombment by Giovanni Buonconsiglio (1497-1530):

...the dead Christ stiff and rigid - the Virgin looking up in despair - and St John standing up behind...A gloomy landscape and grey burrs of cloud on a lead blue sky against which the rock and leafless trees growing on it stand out darkly...It reminds one, though different in effect, of the Christ in [the] Garden of Olives in the National Gallery. The appearance of the picture is generally Mantegnaesque. The colour is dark and the shadows very black. ⁴³

At Foligno:

In Santa Corona there is a glorious Giovanni Bellini - The Baptism of Christ. Christ stands in the middle - a noble figure with the last glow of the sun lighting his figure. The Baptist stands rough and brown on a rock above him. The background is a fine realistic landscape - dark brown hills mounting up to lighter purple heights which stand out darkly against a clear twilight sky. ⁴⁴

At San Giorgio, Verona:

The gallery has a lovely Entombment by Veronese. Small and apparently not quite finished, I think it must have escaped much restoration as the colours are very pearly and lovely. A kneeling figure of the Magdalen kissing the feet of Christ is particularly beautiful. The top of her head is only seen, her rich brown gown stands out against the blue sky and horizon. The action of her hand holding the feet is very tender. ⁴⁵

At Verona, in the sacristy of Santa Maria in Organo:

Francesco Morone[']...principal work is the decoration of the sacristy - a great deal of ingenuity is expended on the perspective elaboration of the roof. Below there is a double frieze - the upper of popes, lower half-lengths of white cowed monks⁴⁶...they seem to be very fine in the drawing of their heavily falling drapery reminding one in the character of work as well as in the subject of

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ These figures are actually saints rather than monks. In the central division of the roof mentioned by Howard, the subject is the Saviour floating with saints, much foreshortened.

Legros.⁴⁷

At Padua, the chapel of S Maria dell' Arena, he saw again Giotto's frescoes of the Life of the Virgin and the Life of Christ, which he had first viewed five years before:

Giotto's Chapel appeared if possible more striking than my recollection of it. It is wonderful how superior he is not only to his contemporaries but to founders of other schools which lived long after him. The flowing lines and great composition of his draperies, his power of reserve, and the nobility of his heads are all remarkable in comparison with the fidgetty broken folds that the Germans and Viennese delight in.⁴⁸

Howard delighted in 'discovering' the names of lesser known artists on his travels, amongst whom he numbered Liberale da Verona (1451-c1515), Gianfrancesco Caroto (1470-1546), Girolamo dei Libri (1474-1556) and Paolo Morandi (1486-1522). Of these, his critiques of Girolamo dei Libri and Morandi make enlightening reading. Both are praised for the portrait-like character of their heads, but Morandi's draperies are 'sometimes broken up in a too German manner' and his use of colour is criticised as being garish, whilst 'the shadows of his flesh colours are very cold'.⁴⁹ Howard shared Burne-Jones's reverence for Durer, but was growing critical of some mannerist elements of Germanic art. He was drawn to the softer lines and warmer tones of the Italian masters. In Burne-Jones' case Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci were perhaps most notably in the ascendant. Howard also professed a marked preference for the Florentine school: artists such as Giotto (c1267-1337), Pinturicchio (c1454-1513), Donatello (c1386-c1466), and Luca della Robbia (fl 1397-1482). He retained a residual regard for the merits of closely-observed detail, as his notes on Jacopo da Bassano's (1510-1592) *Rest during the Flight into Egypt* at the Academy in Bassano show:

The foreground flowers are worked with minute care - the donkey is evidently a loving portrait.⁵⁰

Howard also made observations concerning the settings of a number of the villas that he

⁴⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/112/5

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

visited, his comments again revealing Costa's strengthening influence:

...there is a villa at Maser...The villa itself, though of late renaissance is made cheerful by its decoration. It is in a lovely situation with its back to a hill covered with cypresses and chestnuts against which the statues and fountains and terraces look bright and in front a flat plain covered with vines and mulberry trees.⁵¹

He made many sketches in the streets of the towns he visited, later working them up into such paintings as *Washerwomen at the Fountain at Feltre, Belluno* (fig. 48),⁵² a picture somewhat reminiscent in its uncomplicated frankness of T.M. Rooke's documentary watercolours undertaken some years later at the behest of Ruskin.

An untitled and undated⁵³ oil painting by Howard of Italian reapers (Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery) (fig. 49) belongs to this period, and is a key work in highlighting the crossroad at which Howard was poised during the early 1870s. Although the setting is evidently intended to be Italian, the hills have a coarseness about them that appears more Cumbrian than Umbrian, as does the diffuse light and pale hazy sky. The closely-observed foreground detail declares his ongoing debt to Ruskin. The treatment of the subject owes something to Legros, with a note of sobriety being introduced by the sage-looking elderly man seated to the left of the composition (fig. 51). However, both the subject matter and neo-classical costumes reflect Howard's association with the 'Poetry without Grammar' group.

Following the three years during which there is no indication that Howard exhibited anywhere, his understated comeback was marked by an untitled work in the Dudley's annual watercolour show in 1872. The following year he exhibited another watercolour, *Hampton Court from the Canal* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig. 52a), priced at

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sketchbook IX contains sketches in pencil and watercolour for this painting. It also contains sketches of the fresco of Jephtha's daughter by Morto da Feltre, at Feltre, and the frescoes outside a house in Bassano depicting 'a charming romp of fat babies.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/113

⁵³ Howard had been 'tracing some figures from Greek pots' (Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, dated March 1870) whilst in Italy during the winter of 1869/70, which he may have incorporated into this painting (fig. 50). The model for the head of the central female figure is Rosalind Howard. She wears the same gown as the water-carrier in *Venus and Cupid*. These factors, in conjunction with the stylistic nuances of the painting, assist in dating it to 1870-1.

£21.0.0. This was followed in 1874 by two further watercolours: *Lanercost Priory, Cumberland* (priced at £21.0.0) and *Mushroom Gatherers* (priced at £25.0.0). These paintings manifest an emphatic bias towards landscape; the literary and historical figure compositions with which Howard had ambitiously begun were set to be left behind, his illustration to *The Legend of the Pagan Painter* in the *People's Magazine* for 1872 being his final such subject. It was not until the winter of 1877 that Howard finally exhibited his first finished oil painting: *Wareham, looking towards Corfe Castle*, which was sold for £15.0.0 prior to exhibition at the Dudley. From 1877, Italian subject matter predominated in his exhibited works, being supplemented by Indian and Egyptian subjects in his later years.

Once he had begun to work regularly under Costa, Howard adopted the practice of sketching in oils on mahogany or cedar panels.⁶⁴ He did not find the transition an easy one, and his early oil sketches appear somewhat muddy and uncertain (fig. 52). Not until later did they acquire a sense of assurance, often characterised by a visual shorthand expressed by bold blocks of colour and uni-directional brushstrokes (figs 53 & 54). In time, Howard's rapid panoramic landscape sketches came to possess their own evocative atmosphere (fig. 54a). Despite Costa's advocacy of the exclusive use of oils, Howard was encouraged from other quarters to continue painting and exhibiting watercolours, the medium with which he felt a natural affinity. He executed many accomplished watercolour landscapes, such as *January on the Riviera* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig. 55) and *The Fishpond at Vallombrosa* (Private Collection) (fig. 56). He was elected an honorary member of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour in 1891.

In 1873 Howard stayed near Bamborough Castle in Northumberland, accompanied by his family and the writer George Eliot. The grandeur of the scenery and the castle's proximity to the coast and expanses of sand dunes nearby inspired him to paint in the locality many times on both this and successive visits (figs 57, 58 & 59). Perhaps its appeal as a subject for his paintings lay in the echo of Pisan sand dunes and windswept

⁶⁴ Howard often used panels from the cedar boxes in which his cigars were delivered for sketching upon. This was also Costa's practice.

foreshore (fig. 60).

Costa spent the summers of 1873 and 1874 at Port d'Anzio, where he completed *Women stealing Wood*. His biographer observes that these were the years during which his style became fixed. Of Howard's progress during these early years of the decade there is little to be gleaned apart from his fixity of purpose and strengthening adherence to Costa's teachings, as has already been noted.

Over the winter and spring of 1874/5 the Howards were in Italy once more, staying at the Villa Bianchi near San Remo for five months. Howard worked intermittently at *The Lemon Garden* whilst there, beginning it in January and finishing it three months later. He also completed his 'large sketch of the Capo Nero'. Rosalind observed that it was 'beautifully done - the olives on the distant slopes are wonderfully successful.'⁵⁵ The Howards were visited by Edward Lear (1812-1888), who was living at San Remo, and Howard's work was shown to him, proving to be, much to Lear's apparent amazement, unexpectedly proficient:

The drawings arrived and the *Lemon Garden* was displayed. 'Oh Oh you *can* draw - Oh I am so surprised - I had no idea - I never asked to see your drawings all this time because you know it is so embarrassing to look at bad drawings and I can't pay compliments so I only look foolish and don't know what to say...But I see *you* have worked - and that you have studied the figure. I am really so surprised and quite pleased.'⁵⁶

The Howards returned to Naworth for the summer months of 1875, where they were visited by Webb, Morris, Burne-Jones and Matthew Arnold. Here Howard executed a series of informal portrait sketches of his guests (figs 61-64), as it was his practice to do throughout his life.⁵⁷ Naworth came to be a favourite summer haunt for most of Howard's closest friends: the Morrises, Burne-Joneses, Webb, the Cranes, the Costas (fig. 65), Froude, Stopford Brooke, Matthew Arnold and Arthur Hughes and his nephew all visited on repeated occasions.

⁵⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/18, March 3rd 1875

⁵⁶ Rosalind Howard quoted by Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.104. Source uncited.

⁵⁷ Gladstone was to record in his diary for June 5th 1879: 'George Howard made the most clever sketch of me in the forenoon.' Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.120. Quoted from *The Gladstone Diaries*, ix, p.419

January 1876 saw Howard back in Italy for three months. He worked in close company with Costa, riding in the *campagna* each week. He thought it:

...more heavenly than anything you can imagine. Yesterday I rode where the whole country looked like a Cumberland moor covered with asphodel instead of heather. ⁵⁸

George and Rosalind's Howard's relative characteristics were by now moving towards a slow but steady polarisation; in Rome, the British Ambassador's wife, Lady Paget was to observe that Rosalind had 'an expression of hardness in her light blue eyes.' In contrast, Howard was possessed of 'excessive gentleness' and 'a truly artistic mind. He looked at art from its highest aspect...'⁵⁹

The mid-1870s were a time of active campaigning for Howard; he became deeply involved, along with Morris, in the activities of the Eastern Question Association (EQA), which had been founded in 1876 by the Liberal MP A.J. Mundella. Morris seemed to be:

...shedding one persona and making himself a new one, deliberately preparing for a new role in the world. Public speaking...was still an ordeal to him. But...he now set himself determinedly to acquire and practice the technique. ⁶⁰

This presaged his forthcoming commitment to the Socialist cause. He corresponded regularly with Howard about the situation in the East, but became disillusioned with the Liberal party's apparent unwillingness to take radical action. As matters deteriorated he lost patience, complaining that the EQA was 'full of wretched little personalities'.⁶¹ His bitterness against the Tories continued unabated over the coming years, and when Howard was returned to Parliament as a Liberal MP two years later he wrote ruefully:

Here is a scratch of the pen from a somewhat downtrodden radical to congratulate you very heartily on defeating the enemy in East Cumberland. ⁶²

⁵⁸ Lucas, *The Colvins and their Friends*, p.101

⁵⁹ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.107. Source uncited.

⁶⁰ Kelvin (ed.), *Collected Letters of William Morris*, p.372

⁶¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. Morris to Howard, 1878

⁶² Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. February 28th 1881

The following year, 1877, saw the foundation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), otherwise referred to by those involved in its work as Anti-Scrape. Its manifesto was freely adapted from Ruskin:

Take proper care of your monuments and you will not need to restore them. Watch an old building with anxious care...bind it together with iron where it loosens, stay it with timber where it declines. Do not care about the ugliness of the aid; better a crutch than a lost limb... ⁶³

Howard was a founder member and chaired many of the society's meetings. SPAB at once set about creating an exhaustive list of worthy buildings which had not yet suffered from over-zealous restoration, and Howard enlisted the aid of R.S. Ferguson, a Carlisle barrister devoted to the study of Cumbria's antiquities. He also alerted the society to G.E. Street's proposed restoration of the friary at Carlisle cathedral, to which Morris replied:

Thanks for the news about the Friary; I think we may put a spoke in their wheel...I am going to write to Ferguson about it. ⁶⁴

Despite the disparity in their relative political stances, in future years Howard also attended many of Morris's lectures and Socialist addresses, for which he expressed his deep admiration, even going as far on one occasion as to confess that Socialism had its attractions for him. The correspondence between Howard and Morris more usually concerns business, commissions or 'causes' than personal matters, and the sympathy between the two was epitomised by actions rather than words.⁶⁵ There cannot be a more fitting synopsis of Howard's relationship with Morris than that composed by Fiona MacCarthy:

Between Morris and George Howard...the rapport was very close, a subtle

⁶³ MacCarthy, *William Morris*, p.376

⁶⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. Morris to Howard, July 6th 1877

⁶⁵ For example, in March 1882 Morris enlisted Howard's aid to block a parliamentary bill which would have enabled the London and South Western Water Company to tap the head springs of the River Wandle at Carshalton. Morris had opted for the Merton Abbey site for his works largely because of the water quality of the Wandle, but he was equally incensed 'on public grounds' about the adverse effects that would result. He asked Howard if he could 'do anything in the House to stop such a damned iniquity'. (Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. March 16th 1882)

intertwining of politics and families and wallpaper and art.⁶⁶

They were to work together in several causes over the coming years.

1877 was the year in which Howard finished his self portrait, begun at San Remo in 1875 (Private Collection) (fig. 65). He depicted himself quarter-length, dressed in his habitual garb of red tam o'shanter and loose-fitting suit, seated beside a large open window beyond which the hills and tranquil coastline of San Remo extend. Circumstantial confinement is strongly suggested: the building in which he is seated, with its stone sill and metal-framed window, appears almost prison-like, and stands as a barrier between him and the beckoning landscape beyond. The painting's inscription is a telling adaptation of the Howard family motto, 'Volo non Valeo'. Howard chose to write instead 'Volo non Valeo quia Nequeo quod Desidero' - 'I do not wish for strength because I am unable to achieve that which I desire'. His inscription reflects not only Howard's impotence to throw off the connotations of his social rank but also the perennial ambivalence that he felt towards his abilities as a painter, which he never succeeded in overriding. In this, his ultimate work of self-definition, he depicted himself without any of the paraphernalia of his calling. In contrast, William Blake Richmond's portrait of Howard, painted at Naworth in 1880, casts him unequivocally as an artist, poised beside one of his paintings, palette and brush in hand.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.213. Jenny and May Morris spent the summer of 1870 at Naworth, during which time they seemed 'to have been in Paradise' (Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. Jane Morris to Rosalind Howard). Howard painted their portrait, which 'is so very like Jenny and May and such a pretty picture altogether.' (Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. Morris to Howard). The picture hangs at Kelmscott Manor.

CHAPTER 5

The Grosvenor Gallery years 1877-90

By 1877, the Dudley Gallery was the sole independent exhibiting institution remaining to relieve the dominance of the Royal Academy and the watercolour societies.¹ The British Institution had lasted for only six years (1870-76), and the Supplementary Exhibition for two (1869-71). However, May 1st 1877 saw the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery, the brainchild of Sir Coutts Lindsay (1824-1913).² Its repercussions were to be widely felt; indeed, in Gillett's opinion, it 'permanently affected the English art scene.'³

When the Grosvenor Gallery opened, Howard had known the Lindsays for over a decade. He became acquainted with them through his sister-in-law Blanche Airlie in 1865, and he and Rosalind had been guests of the couple at Balcarres Castle near the Fifeshire coast in 1868. Still impressionable, Rosalind had enthused to Blanche that 'they have an extremely beautiful artistic house full of everything that is beautiful...'⁴ Before their marriage, Blanche Fitzroy⁵ had studied at Heatherley's, whilst Coutts Lindsay (1824-1913) had a long-standing admiration for Watts and was associated with the Little Holland House set from the late 1850s. Whilst in Rome during the mid 1850s he had frequented the house of Mr and Mrs Sartoris. Here he came to know Frederic Leighton well, widening his circle of acquaintance on his return to London where his charisma made him a popular addition to Mrs Sartoris's coterie of artists and proteges. Lindsay was an artist of ability; in 1862 he exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first

¹ The Dudley ran from 1865 until 1918.

² Virginia Surtees summarises Lindsay as 'baronet at thirteen, the golden boy, the legendary figure of later years, a talented painter and loving son, fatally attractive to women and a faithless husband.' Surtees, *Coutts Lindsay*, p.9

³ Gillett, *Art Publics in late Victorian England*, p.229

⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J23/2. September 29th 1868

⁵ Caroline Blanche Elizabeth Fitzroy (1844-1912) was the daughter of Henry Fitzroy MP and Hannah Meyer Fitzroy, nee Rothschild.

time⁶ and continued to do so intermittently until 1870. Blanche, whose passion for art equalled his own, possessed the additional advantage of having a vast fortune at her disposal, a fortune which would later facilitate Lindsay's grandiose scheme for a new gallery space in London.

Lindsay had advocated the expansion of the Royal Academy into a public body, expressing in essay form his hopes that it would in future offer greater opportunities to a wider circle of artists. In 1871 his speech at the prize-giving ceremony for students at the South Kensington Schools was received with consternation by several prominent Academicians, and in 1872 his submission was rejected by the Royal Academy selection committee. In response, Lindsay planned to stage an exhibition of work by fellow-artists who had also suffered rejection by the Academy. He found it impossible to hire a suitable venue, however, and so the notion of opening a gallery of his own germinated instead.

Much of 1876 was taken up with planning the venture. A house party at Balcarres Castle, where preliminary discussions took place, included Howard, Charles Edward Hallé (1846-1914), Joseph Comyns Carr (1849-1916),⁷ Dicky Doyle (1824-1883) and Louise Jopling (1843-1933).

The new gallery drew a broad base of support from within the artistic fraternity; Walter Crane, who was to become one of the Grosvenor's most prolific exhibitors, wrote enthusiastically to Howard concerning the proposal:

You will have heard...of Sir Coutts Lindsay's scheme of a new Gallery - a kind of cave of Adullam for distressed artists - those who have suffered many things at the hands of the Academy...even Burne-Jones has promised to send. ⁸

He added that Lindsay, somewhat paradoxically given the impetus behind its *naissance*,

⁶ A portrait of the artist's mother.

⁷ Hallé and Carr were to co-manage the gallery. Carr also acted as the Grosvenor's resident press representative. Carr was a playwright and author, as well as being both founder and editor of the *English Illustrated Magazine*. He was also Dramatic Critic to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the English editor of *L'Art* and wrote the column 'The Painters of the Day' in *The Globe* under the pseudonym Ignatus. Hallé was the son of the musician Sir Charles Hallé. He was a painter of portraits and decorative figure compositions, exhibiting at the Royal Academy between 1866 and 1882, where he showed predominantly portraits.

⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. February 27th 1876

did not wish his proposed palace of art to bear an air of opposition to the Royal Academy; works previously rejected by the Academy were not to be submitted for exhibition at the Grosvenor. Several artists, including Leighton, continued to exhibit at the Academy concurrently with the Grosvenor, with apparently little real conflict of interests arising.

The project gathered momentum; William Thomas Sams (fl. 1868-78) was appointed architect and a site in New Bond Street was decided upon. Building work began in June 1876, and within a year the Grosvenor Gallery was preparing to open its doors.

The Grosvenor was decorated in an Italianate style of grandeur and ostentation, a fitting complement to its Renaissance-style facade, into which had been built a doorway by Palladio.⁹ The West Gallery was the Grosvenor's principal space, and:

...any work shown in the West Gallery may be assumed to be something which contemporary opinion would have regarded as important and characteristic of the artist who made it. ¹⁰

It was resplendent, with its ceiling painted in deep blue and gold to represent the night sky, a frieze of cherubs designed by Lindsay himself, and walls hung with crimson damask with a dado of deep green velvet beneath. The effect of the crimson wall-coverings, dubbed the 'savage red wall'¹¹ by Henry James, proved injurious to some of the paintings hung in the gallery, however, with Burne-Jones' pictures suffering particularly badly. The second largest space was the East Gallery, which:

...was also an exhibition space which artists of all sorts aspired to, but with somewhat less kudos than the West. ¹²

It was also initially hung with the offending crimson, but its wall-coverings were toned down for the second exhibition. Crane wrote to Howard regarding the redecoration:

I am glad to say they given us a more sober background at the Grosvenor this time. That is, they have covered the East Gallery with a greyish green hanging, but the large gallery still keeps its crimson robes...Watts holds his place at the

⁹ The doorway had formerly been in the Church of Santa Lucia, Venice.

¹⁰ Newall, *Grosvenor Gallery*, p.43

¹¹ (ed.) Sweeney, *The Painter's Eye*, p.147

¹² Newall, *Grosvenor Gallery*, p.43

end, and Whistler and Legros are there. ¹³

As well as its two principal exhibition spaces, the Grosvenor could boast the South Gallery, the Sculpture Gallery, the Watercolour Gallery and three additional rooms.

Hanging practices at the Grosvenor were unorthodox, with the customary 'line' being discarded. Works were hung with a greater amount of space between them than had ever been accommodated elsewhere, and wherever possible each artist's work was grouped together, with pilasters¹⁴ acting as notional dividers. The practice:

...allowed the spectator's eye and mind to be absorbed entirely by what that painter had to give them... ¹⁵

This innovative approach allowed for much-improved viewing conditions, and stood in marked contrast to the hanging policies of other institutions. Even the exhibitions at the Dudley, despite its progressive ethos, remained as overcrowded with pictures as the Royal Academy. The Grosvenor hang was also devised with a consciousness of the beneficial or detrimental effect that each work might potentially have on its neighbours. It was Lindsay's intention to elevate art to its rightful place by creating a gallery with a self-acclamatory status, encouraging reverential contemplation in a setting appropriately palatial.

Submission to the Grosvenor was strictly by invitation, in preference to the jury system adhered to by other galleries. In another procedure running contrary to accepted practice, artists, once invited to contribute, were free to select whichever examples of their work they wished to exhibit. Thus they were enabled to decide for themselves whether or not they preferred to display their principal paintings there. This new practice also allowed for the accommodation of works not adjudged as being characteristic by the viewing public: Leighton, for example, opted in 1879 to exhibit a number of landscape sketches painted whilst touring the Mediterranean.

For members of the Etruscan school, the Grosvenor offered further advantages:

¹³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. May 2nd 1878

¹⁴ The walls of the West gallery were punctuated with sixteen gilded Ionic pilasters, which Lindsay had salvaged from the foyer of the old Italian Opera House in Paris.

¹⁵ Mary Watts, quoted in Denney, *Grosvenor Gallery* (Exh. London & Denver), 1996, p.23

landscapes were afforded the same status as figure paintings. There had remained an enduring distinction between high art, incorporating classical and literary allusions, which would be perceived and interpreted correctly only by the highly-educated elite, and other forms of painting. Lindsay disregarded this long-preserved hierarchy by hanging a miscellany of works in close proximity and distinguishing between them not by subject but by artist. In a refusal to pander to public whim, the gallery side-stepped the predominating middle-class appetite for genre and subject pictures.

At the gallery's inception, sales were not deemed the uppermost consideration, which fostered a perception that the artists showing at the Grosvenor existed above commercial considerations. This emphasis on aesthetic superiority was further underpinned by allowing the exhibition of works from private collections, along with those for sale, so that a more comprehensive idea of an artist's *oeuvre* could be conveyed. Through this combination of unorthodoxies Lindsay sought to establish, or perhaps rather to recognise, an elite of both artist and highly-sensitised viewer. Unsurprisingly, the affectations of some of its regular *habitués*, amongst them Oscar Wilde, were soon to be mercilessly lampooned by cartoonists and social commentators alike.

The inaugural exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery proved a resounding success, fully justifying the enormous expenditure which had gone into creating it.¹⁶ This was due in no small part to the whiff of dubiousness attached to it, upon the back of which popularity inevitably rode. Several established art critics of the day were scathing about Burne-Jones's langorous androgynes. *The Times* reported that:

Such pictures as these seem unaccountable freaks of individual eccentricity, or the strange and unwholesome fruits of hopeless wanderings in the mazes of mysticism and mediaevalism. On the other hand a devoted if small minority holds that there is no salvation out of the pale of this school.¹⁷

Despite this, their reception by the viewing public was rapturous. The *penchant* for the unusual, noted by critics of the first Grosvenor show, was to be confirmed in the gallery's second exhibition. Henry James observed that 'it had undertaken to be

¹⁶ The gallery had cost approximately £120,000, a sum which had been financed in equal halves by Blanche and Coutts Lindsay.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 1st May 1877

excessively 'peculiar'...People...have, at least, a strong impression that this exhibition will somehow not be as other exhibitions are.'¹⁸ The Whistler-Ruskin libel case which arose in 1878 following Ruskin's denigration of *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*, caused yet further sensation.

William Michael Rossetti wrote of the inaugural exhibition, at which sixty-four exhibitors showed a total of two hundred and sixteen works, in more measured tones than *The Times'* critic had adopted:

This is a rather miscellaneous selection: there are the illustrious, the skilful, the mediocre, and the obscure, natives and aliens, professionals and amateurs...¹⁹

As which, one wonders, would he have classed Howard? Rossetti's words highlight a factor which other critics were not slow to recognise. The social composition of those invited to exhibit at the Grosvenor invited scrutiny; Lindsay had married a palatial building with a number of aristocratic exhibitors, which would serve to encourage patronage both by society's elite and the socially ambitious. He had endeavoured to create a palace of art for 'sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, pleasures forever closed to the profane'.²⁰ In so doing, however, he had undermined the Grosvenor's claim to represent a meritocracy in the eyes of those who found the principles upon which the gallery was founded distasteful. As Denney notes, in a cartoon in its May 1877 issue, the satirical journal *Fun* sneered at the fact that a notable proportion of the exhibition's exhibitors were titled amateurs:

...Brown, a hard working artist, asks a top-hatted "Swell Amateur" if he is showing anything at the Academy this year. "No sir," replies the Swell, in aristocratic diction, "I exhibit by invitation at the Gwovenor."²¹

Amongst these 'swell amateurs' could be numbered Count Gleichen, Lady Louisa Charteris, the Countess of Warwick, Lady Waterford, Princess Louise and, of course, the Honourable George Howard. Of all the titled exhibitors who showed at the Grosvenor

¹⁸ Sweeney (ed.), *The Painter's Eye*, p.161

¹⁹ *The Academy* (May 5th 1877), p.396

²⁰ Denney, *Grosvenor Gallery* (Exh. London & Denver), 1996, p.22

²¹ *Ibid*, p.41

over the coming years, however, only Howard and Count Gleichen exhibited on an annual basis, the latter's submissions being predominantly society portraits. Such portraits heightened the visitors' awareness that they were privy to a culturally rarified experience when calling at the Grosvenor. Howard, in contrast, exhibited only landscapes.

Lindsay 'groomed' those whom he knew could be instrumental in aiding him to formulate exhibitions incorporating a broad-based body of work at the gallery. It was essential that he maximised the benefit that could be gleaned from his network of contacts, and he:

...had the wit to recognize the need for a broad church in contemporary art. This was signalled in the first exhibition with the works of Giovanni Costa and Ferdinand Heilbuth, which were borrowed from the aristocratic collections into which they had recently gone, and for which, in a number of cases, it was likely that Sir Coutts made use of George Howard's Etruscan connections.²²

Howard, then, with his elevated social status, pan-European contacts and close friendship with Burne-Jones, must have recognised that his inclusion in the first Grosvenor Gallery exhibition was unlikely to have had Lindsay's unalloyed admiration for his work as its impetus. Indeed, the letter in which Blanche Lindsay invited him to submit examples of his work was couched in specific terms, perhaps indicating that it was deemed advisable for her to specify appropriate paintings for the show:

...my husband is very anxious to have two or three of your husband's beautiful landscape drawings for the watercolour room of the Grosvenor Gallery...I wonder if Mr Howard would mind my saying that I hope he will send a beautiful drawing of pine trees near Pisa which made a very great impression on me.²³

Howard in fact submitted five works, only two of which were watercolours (*Capo Nero, San Remo* and *A Lemon Garden, San Remo*²⁴). The remaining three were oils: *In the Pine Woods at San Rossore near Pisa, La Citta delle Belle Torre, San Gimignano* (fig.

²² Kenneth McConkey, *Grosvenor Gallery* (Exh. London & Denver), 1996, pp.129-130. There was only one work by Costa in the opening show: *A Winter Evening on the Sands near Ardea, Campagna di Roma*, more commonly known as *Women Stealing Wood on the Shore near Ardea on an Evening when the Libeccio Blows*, and it was lent by Howard. He had purchased it from Mrs Percy Wyndham.

²³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. Blanche Lindsay to Rosalind Howard, April 14th 1877

²⁴ This painting was started in January 1875. Rosalind Howard recorded that 'he says he is going to finish it up very highly'. Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/18. January 28th.

66) and *Near the Torre dei Riccardi*, and these were hung in the East Gallery.

The Etruscan School at the Grosvenor Gallery

The Grosvenor Gallery opened at an auspicious time for the Etruscan School, whose paintings were characterised by their broad panoramic format and subdued, harmonious palette (figs 67, 68 & 69); it was an innovative movement with progressive precepts well suited to the ethos of the Grosvenor. Indeed, Costa has been referred to as ‘perhaps the most influential of all Grosvenor landscape painters.’²⁵ The gallery became the group’s foremost exhibiting forum, and its members showed strongly there annually until 1888, when their allegiance was transferred to the New Gallery.

The associations at the heart of the Etruscan School were already formed well over a decade before its belated ‘formalisation’ in 1883, the catalyst for which is likely to have been the universally positive response to the exhibition of Costa’s work at the Fine Art Society over the winter months of 1882/3. Several of the principal members of the school had been working together, or under Costa’s influence or tutelage, since the early 1870s. The English contingent included Howard, Edgar Barclay (born 1842, date of death unknown), Walter Maclaren (fl. 1869-1909), Matthew Ridley Corbet (1850-1902), John Collingham Moore (1829-1880) and Walter James, Lord Northbourne (1816-1893). William Blake Richmond also worked with Costa many times over a prolonged period, and readily acknowledged his influence.²⁶ The *scuola* included two Americans: Eugene Benson (1839-1908) and Edith Murch (1850 - c.1920), who was to marry Matthew Ridley Corbet later in the decade. A number of Italians were also absorbed into the group: Giuseppe Cellini (b. 1855), Cesare Formilli (dates unknown), Napoleone Parisani (1854-1932), Gaetano Vannicola (1859-1923) and Norberto Pazzini (1856-

²⁵ Newall, *Grosvenor Gallery*, p.29

²⁶ As early as 1871 Richmond’s work, exhibited that year at the Royal Academy, had been recognised as signalling a new movement in landscape painting which married reverence for the antique with affection for modern Italy. This individualistic interpretation of landscape was seen as ‘a timely protest against the vulgar naturalism, the common realism, which is applauded by the uneducated multitudes who throng our London exhibitions.’ (*Art J.*, (1871), p.177, quoted in Newall, *The Etruscans* (Exh. Stoke on Trent), 1989, p.18)

1937).

Costa's pronouncements on art, of which the *Bibbia Etrusca*, or 'Etruscan Bible' was comprised, were recorded by Howard during group discussions over the winter months of 1883/4.²⁷ Etruscan painting was in essence the subjective interpretation of nature; with an intimate knowledge of the landscape, Costa believed that it should be possible to distill the soul of a locality onto the final canvas. In his eyes the sentiment of the subject was paramount, and this was to be encapsulated in the study taken from nature. The finished painting ought then to be worked up in the studio.²⁸ All paintings were to be approached in the same way:

...work should be systematised and done in order - 1st, the construction and building up of the whole; 2nd, the colour; 3rd, the atmosphere. ²⁹

Costa's preferred panoramic format meant that draughtsmanship and the picture's constructional values were paramount:

The Etruscan School consists in seeing the direction of the lines and drawing them in with strength. ³⁰

Costa warned that care should be taken not to allow the concave lines to fall weakly in, and to remember that the earth is itself convex.³¹

The modelling and *chiaroscuro* should be done in monochrome. Walter James, in his lecture *The Development of Modern Landscape*, cited Costa's methodology and approach to colour:

²⁷ Some of Howard's own ideas on technique were later recorded by Estella Canziani. See Appendix 1.

²⁸ Costa opined that the main difference between the Impressionists and Etruscans lay in the fact that 'Impressionists do what they see without reasoning or really feeling it; the Etruscan gets his impression, and works upon it, and develops it at home, adding to the skill of his hands and the exactness of his eye judgement and feeling as to form, and the direction of colour and lines.' (Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.213)

²⁹ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.214

³⁰ Ibid. p.213

³¹ Ibid. p.213. Agresti actually cites Costa as having said 'Be careful not to let the convex lines fall weakly in, and remember that the whole earth is concave.' However, the informality of the way in which his sayings were committed to paper, and the geometrical illogicality of this sentence make it more likely that at some stage the two key words 'concave' and 'convex' have become transposed.

The essential features of the method consist in a fixing of the 'values' in the first dead-colouring of the picture, the local colours being superimposed in such a way that these 'values' are preserved right up to the final stage of completion.³²

The breadth of handling by which Etruscan paintings were characterised arose from Costa's conviction that they should take their form from the spaces of the background, and that one 'must always proceed from the masses to the detail'.³³ One must avoid the confusion which putting in the details before being certain of the exact value of each of the chief planes might give rise to.

Many paintings by members of the Etruscan School sought to capture the fleeting impressions of dawn or dusk, and in such cases the chosen location would be visited and revisited until the essence of the moment had crystallised and been translated in oils onto board (fig. 70). It was common practice for the Etruscan painters to keep several canvases on the go at any one time, the subject of each of which was taken at a specific time of day. The point is illustrated in Howard's correspondence:

As soon as I have finished the drawing I am now doing in the morning[s] I shall begin an early [morning] subject and come home for the middle of the day.³⁴

'Costa has two pictures going for morning and evening.'³⁵

Costa's advice was to paint 'few and small, but good'. In short, the Etruscan School stood opposed to 'shoppiness in art',³⁶ the appeal of its members' work lying in its integrity. It was noted in the *Magazine of Art's* review of Costa's exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1882/3 that:

[A] point worthy of notice in Professor Costa's art is that he seldom chooses what other artists would seize upon as picturesque or striking forms...as a rule, he seems to prefer scenes which are comparatively tame, and lines that are

³² James, *Development of Modern Landscape*, p.43. Lecture delivered October 31st 1919.

³³ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.216

³⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 20th 1886

³⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 25th 1886

³⁶ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.210

comparatively vague.³⁷

The Times' reviewer wrote with greater perception:

It may not be extravagant praise to say that Signor Costa has come nearer than most modern landscape-painters to the solution which is striven after in all art...the union of real truth with the highest poetical ideal.³⁸

Over the winter of 1877/8 Howard had spent several months in Italy, largely at the Villa del Cavo at Oneglia. Costa had written encouragingly about his progress:

Working for real as you have had the fortune to do this year, forms the basis of the art of the future life of a man.³⁹

On his return Howard showed four paintings at the Grosvenor, all of them Italian subjects: *Rest in the Pergola* (fig. 71), *The Path among the Olives* (fig. 72), *Olive Gathering on the Riviera* (fig. 73), and *Twilight by the River Mouth, Oneglia* (fig. 74), more usually referred to as *Women washing clothes at the mouth of the River Oneglia*. The latter painting was singled out for compliment in correspondence from Thomas Armstrong (1832-1911),⁴⁰ Walter Crane and Jane Morris. Crane wrote thus:

I am glad to see you had sent to the Grosvenor, and that you show in such force. I congratulate you more particularly on the twilight at the river's mouth which is a very powerful drawing. One can almost hear the distant sound of the waves where the river meets the sea.⁴¹

³⁷ Cartwright (*Magazine of Art*, VII (1883), p.27)

³⁸ Quoted in Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.246

³⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/35. Costa to Howard, March 23rd 1878. The extensive body of correspondence from Costa to Howard is all in Italian. Costa's wife Antonina corresponded in English.

⁴⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/26 April 17th 1878. Thomas Armstrong was a Manchester businessman turned artist, designer and administrator of art education. He trained in Paris during the 1850s with du Maurier, Poynter, Whistler *et al*, and the character Taffy in du Maurier's novel *Trilby* is modelled on Armstrong. He settled in London in 1860, executing paintings which had social deprivation as their overriding theme. During the 1860s he became associated with the emergent Aesthetic movement before coming under the influence of Costa when he was introduced to him by Howard in the mid 1870s. In 1881 Armstrong was appointed Director of the Art Division of the Department of Science and Art, based at South Kensington Museum, where he had formerly been Keeper of Art; at Armstrong's request, Howard 'scouted' for objects for the museum. The two maintained their friendship until they died. Howard was also instrumental in the acquisition of works for the National Gallery, even before he was appointed a Trustee. In 1875 he had found in Siena a fragment of a fresco, *A Group of Poor Clares*, by the Sieneese artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti, for the purchase of which Charles Fairfax Murray acted as intermediary on the gallery's behalf (Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray*, p.72.).

⁴¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. May 2nd 1878

And from Jane Morris:

I can't help writing you a line about your pictures at the Grosvenor...I was so glad to see the evening one looking even more beautiful than when in your villa, the light coming from the sky-light somehow seemed to fall on the picture itself without casting a ray on its frame, the yellow colour of the latter therefore does not take away in the very least from the gold of the painting, which remains brilliant though deep in tone; the day was not favourable when I saw it either, but it shone out like a star, it was well hung...not too much crowded with other things near; your others showed themselves to great perfection, but you know they did not take quite such a hold in my mind as the large one - I thought you might like to know how they struck me in public who had seen them in different stages...⁴²

Women washing clothes is a glowing sunset scene; in the foreground three women wash their laundry in the shallows of the glassy river, observed by a fourth, who sits at rest upon her upturned basket. On the far bank of the river a walled building flanked by pine trees stands in the gathering shadows. In the middle distance a second group of women kneel at the very mouth of the Oneglia, silhouetted against the line of white spume which marks the clash of river and sea. The calm of the river reflecting the glorious evening sky, contrasting with the energy of the rolling sea beyond is most effective, but the foreground figures possess a certain staginess which detracts from the picture's atmospheric qualities. It is telling that his friends praised the picture's light and atmosphere, with any mention of figurative content being conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, much of Howard's work during the the mid- to late-1870s retained a rather prosaic and documentary quality particularly evident in the figure content, as *Rest in the Pergola* (fig. 71), *The Path among the Olives* (fig. 73) and *Olive Gathering on the Riviera* (fig. 74)⁴³ each demonstrate. This stolidness arose from a tendency to become preoccupied with detail, and is particularly evident in the costumes and 'trappings' of the rural Italians that were standard constituents in his paintings at this date. Howard, like many other artists of his time, took a great interest in photography. His collection of photographs included not only those of old master works, but also of plants, animals,

⁴² Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. June 5th 1878

⁴³ Howard's painting *Olive Gathering on the Riviera* was hung in close proximity to *The Olive Harvest, Algeria* (fig. 75) by Edgar Barclay, a fellow 'Etruscan'. The two pictures bear more than a passing resemblance to each other.

towns and people. One of his albums (Private Collection) makes it evident that Howard at times worked closely from photographs, and this may in part account for the documentary tone of some of his paintings. From the 1870s Howard used photography to supplement his own studies of locations, particularly if he did not know when he would return, investing a great deal of time in taking his own photographs as well as purchasing those commercially available.

Howard was unable to travel to Italy in 1879; his father died in April and after much reflection he stood as Parliamentary candidate in his place.⁴⁴ He was returned unopposed to the East Cumberland seat that Charles Howard had held for thirty-eight years. Both Crane and Webb wrote to him, as others had done, with varying degrees of encouragement, each aware of the implications of the change and the possibility that his painting might suffer as a result:

I feel proud to think you belong to the Legislature, although, I fear, public duties will interfere with your painting.⁴⁵

I think you are quite right in coming to the decision you have. The change need not much hinder your own proper work as a painter. Also, I think it will be good for the country to have in the House a member who knows something of the arts, and from personal experience understands the technicalities of Art.⁴⁶

Howard showed three works at the Grosvenor in 1879: two Venetian subjects and *Euganean Hills at Sunset*. *Crab Fishers in the Lagune near Mazonbo* (fig. 76) appears to have been painted at the same time as Henry Darvall's gouache *Crabfishers, Venice, from across the Lagoon* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig. 77). The paintings bear a striking resemblance to each other in both figure content and setting. Darvall and Howard met whilst sketching in Venice during the winter of 1878/9. Darvall (fl.1848-

⁴⁴ Howard harboured serious misgivings about standing for Parliament; he made notes marshalling his arguments against standing but these were overcome, presumably by Rosalind. Castle Howard Archive, J22/114. April 1879. Until 1879 he had had only a light involvement in the running of the family estates, which were primarily administered by trustees, of which he was one, during the remainder of the Eighth Earl's lifetime. However, after his father's death his responsibilities increased considerably, and it was from this date that Rosalind began to assume the role of principal administrator.

⁴⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. Crane to Howard, May 1st 1879

⁴⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Webb to Howard, April 22nd 1879

1889, d.1900) remains a somewhat shadowy figure, referred to as a man of 'extreme unselfishness and unworldliness'.⁴⁷ He was by nature reserved, and lived an isolated and threadbare existence in Venice, becoming another to benefit from Howard's concern during the years leading up to his death. From 1880 Howard purchased paintings from Darvall on an almost annual basis (including *Crabfishers*, which he acquired in 1883) and introduced him to Stopford Brooke, who purchased further works and submitted his name to the Fine Art Society. Darvall was invited to show at the society's Venetian exhibitions as a result.

As the decade neared its close Howard's work shows a distinct progression towards the depiction of expressive landscape, although he continued to find this more easily achieved with watercolour than oils. The two figures in *Crabfishers*, engrossed in their work, truly seem at one with their environment. This is the Italian's Italy, and the far shore of the Lagoon, its streets peopled with tourists, stands remote from their endeavours. *Wayside Gatherers* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig.78), with its expressively sinuous tree forms, further emphasises the point.

In August 1879 Costa joined Howard at Naworth and the two embarked on numerous sketching trips together.⁴⁸ They both made studies of 'the little valley at Greensburn' near Spadeadam, and the banks of the River Irthing.⁴⁹ Two of the resulting paintings were Howard's *A Cumberland Landscape* (Private Collection) (fig. 79) and Costa's *View of the park at Naworth* (National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome) (fig. 80). They possess many parallel qualities: the almost scale-like decorative qualities of the overlapping hills are strongly draughted in both works, which also accentuate the majestic sweep of the old beech trees, lending them a sculptural monumentality. In November they painted together at Bamborough in Northumberland before Costa returned to Italy the following month. Bamborough, which had already proved a fruitful location for Howard, proved

⁴⁷ Castle Howard Archive J22/39. Undated letter to Howard announcing Darvall's death. The correspondent's name is illegible.

⁴⁸ Following his first visit to Naworth, in 1877, Costa had characterised the landscape thus: 'Your Cumberland...with its trees, characters, with its ancient castles and...its great masses of clouds.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/35. Costa to Rosalind Howard, August 3rd 1877

⁴⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/22. September 1st and 27th 1879

equally inspiring to Costa, and they would return there together in future years. During this visit Howard worked at *The Curlew's Pool* [fig. 81) and *Bamboro' from the Budle Hills*, which he exhibited at the Grosvenor in 1881. *The Curlew's Pool* depicts Bamborough Castle from a low vantage point; between foreground and castle, marram-topped dunes graduate to grassy hillocks, broadening into a swathe of undulating hillside leading up to the castle ramparts. The day hovers between sunset and dusk, with the mass of the ancient castle walls thrown into sharp relief and deepening shadow by the fading light, the last glow of which is reflected in the stagnant pool in the foreground of the composition. The scene is suffused by a breathlessness and melancholy, the only living things in this deserted spot being a pair of curlews standing at the water's edge. These Cumberland and Northumberland paintings were executed under close scrutiny and advice from Costa, which proved notably beneficial. He expressed pleasure that Howard was 'not unhappy'⁵⁰ with them.

Howard's landscapes had begun to acquire that quality of suggestiveness at which all Etruscans aimed. Costa had previously observed in Howard a tendency to 'involve himself too soon with the details when he paints in oils'⁵¹, which may have been owing to the fact that his watercolours were generally relatively highly-finished. That he was finally overcoming his ambivalence is evident from his freer handling of the medium in such works as *Start Point, South Devon* (Private Collection) (fig. 82), and the reduction in laboured detail in his oil paintings became conjoined with increased atmosphere and abstraction. He had begun to achieve the lyrical over the topographical. In writing to Rosalind Howard, Costa exclaimed how wonderful it would be to:

...sing in a duet with George, praising oil painting! Since it seems really that we have won the battle, since George has no more repugnance to the medium. What am I saying repugnance? It seems from the reported successes that he loves oils, and that his artistic life will be redoubled with this! ⁵²

In 1880 Howard's East Cumberland seat was opposed, and he was narrowly defeated in

⁵⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/35 February 3rd 1880

⁵¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/35. Costa to Rosalind Howard, December 12th 1877

⁵² Castle Howard Archive, J22/35. March 27th 1880

the subsequent election. It had been rumoured that Howard had 'a soul above politics',⁵³ which detracted somewhat from his candidature. His daughter Dorothy later recalled:

Apart from some personal mortification...he was really rather glad. He had murmured some indiscretions about not caring whether he got in, and of course this was trumpeted all over the constituency.⁵⁴

However, Rosalind Howard had canvassed indefatigably on her husband's behalf and had found the process immensely invigorating and rewarding. Her ambitions on her husband's account took deeper root in anticipation of the forthcoming 1881 General Election, and her campaigning zeal from this date became more and more marked.⁵⁵ She proposed that, should he be returned to Parliament for a second time, they make Castle Howard their home, although it is evident from her words that Howard felt lukewarm about her vision:

You will have great scope & I fancy you will find more enjoyment in it than you yet know. In the meantime we will refresh ourselves in Italy & steep ourselves in painting so that it may as hitherto be the very first interest in life...Luckily C[astle] H[oward] in many ways intensifies the artist's life instead of fighting against it...so now you must shape up life as you want it to abide permanently...⁵⁶

Freed from Parliamentary duties for the time being, he continued to build on his successes from earlier in the year. Rosalind acknowledged the fact:

Dear old boy what a lot you have done and how energetic you are.⁵⁷

The 1881 General Election was looming, however, and it must have been evident to his friends that Howard, who had felt coerced into standing for Parliament once more, was awaiting the outcome with apprehension rather than anticipation. The battle between personal fulfilment and public duty was set to intensify. It seems that Burne-Jones made

⁵³ Roberts, *Radical Countess*, p.58

⁵⁴ Henley, *Rosalind Howard*, p.28

⁵⁵ From 1881 Rosalind Howard became heavily committed to the temperance movement, for which she campaigned with great vigour. To this was soon added her tireless work in the cause of women's suffrage.

⁵⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. October 9th 1880

⁵⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. October 16th 1880

his views on the matter clear to Rosalind Howard:

Ned [Burne-Jones]...was delightful about you. He says he believes that nothing will now make you leave off your painting & that had you no other standpoint in the world except the pictures you paint you would be a good and very valuable artist: that your work improves daily - that your figures are becoming living & flexible - that your workmanship is beautiful & that you must always be an artist and nothing else. So think I & there is a great sense of rest now to me in thinking that the changes and chances are over & that you can't lose your painter life any more. I am almost quite reconciled to your not being in Parliament & think perhaps Fate has taken care of your real interests. Anyway I love your present career & am full of hope. Webb was also most cordial about your work.⁵⁸

In January the Howards travelled to Italy, where they were to be joined at the Villa Margharetta at Bordighera by Jane Morris and her children. Howard was, as ever, confronted with a myriad of beckoning subjects:

The country round is lovely & plenty of subjects different from old ones - a hill with pines - the view of the Mentone mountains - the old town with palms...⁵⁹

He began work at once on a sketch of the old town with a frame of olive and palm trees; he found 'my finger stiff but it was awaking.'⁶⁰ He was again anxious to purchase a property in Italy, perhaps in recognition that proximity to Costa and other members of the *scuola*, and seclusion away from public life, were of the greatest benefit to his painting. He made enquiries into buying the Villa Christetti and the Villa Biancheri, but once again the scheme came to nothing. At the end of January Howard returned to England for the General Election and was returned as MP for East Cumberland for a second time. Perhaps rather freer with her praise than hitherto, with her husband once more safely in Parliament (he was to remain an MP until the General Election of 1885, when he refused to stand again), Rosalind Howard wrote to him:

I went to the Grosvenor & admired your...drawings more than I had ever admired any exhibition work of yours. They looked quite masterly...⁶¹

⁵⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. January 18th 1881

⁵⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, January 11th 1881

⁶⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, January 13th 1881

⁶¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. June 10th 1881

Howard had five works on show there, principal amongst which was *The Curlew's Pool*, which was hung in the West Gallery.⁶² Howard was keen that his standing as an artist should not be compromised by his position as an MP. He was utterly unwilling to renounce his painting, and the consequent tensions between husband and wife were to reflect their opposing wishes as the years passed. Howard was evidently aware that Rosalind lived in continued hopes of his painting being relegated to a subsidiary status, and was willing to withstand her irritation at his refusal to comply:

I hope that you will not be displeased at my showing so many things but Sir Coutts urged it & I am myself...not sorry to seem industrious at the present time. ⁶³

Howard was constantly frustrated by having to attend the House, and a prolonged phase of depression set in. He wrote to Rosalind, evidently at odds with the life that he was now forced to lead in a place which he found to be one of 'distressing frivolity':⁶⁴

The sun has been struggling with the fog all the morning & is now glowing in a subdued and picturesque manner on the river. This makes me still more regret not being in the garden at work. ⁶⁵

Howard was profoundly bored by the tedium of political life, believing the integrity of most politicians was at best questionable. In an effort to inject an element of meaning into his attendance at the House and to promote matters aesthetic, Howard introduced a motion for the Sunday opening of museums and galleries, to be supported by national funds. He was also by now a Trustee of the National Gallery, a position he held for thirty-one years until his death, spanning the terms of office of three Directors.⁶⁶ He also

⁶² The others were *Autumn Twilight*, *By the Beck*, *Bamboro' from the Budle Hills* and *Start Point, South Devon*.

⁶³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. May 1881

⁶⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. May 8th 1883

⁶⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. October 25th 1882

⁶⁶ Howard was a Trustee from 1880 to 1911, acting as Chairman of the Trustees for a considerable period. Thomas Burton was appointed Director in 1876, was succeeded by Poynter in 1894, who in turn retired in 1904 to be replaced by Charles Holroyd. The 1890s were a contentious time at the National Gallery, with much discussion as to the nature of the relationship between Director and Trustees. Joint responsibility for acquisitions and decision-making was the outcome.

assisted in organising an exhibition of works by Giovanni Costa, to be held at the Fine Art Society in 1882. The exhibition was both a critical and public success, assuring Costa's standing in England, for which he acknowledged his indebtedness to Howard.

In preparing for the Grosvenor, where he was to exhibit only one painting that year, *The Path under the Olives, Bordighera*, Howard had written despondently to Rosalind:

I have been [working] at the Bordighera picture. It seems to me that it was not worth coming to town to finish it; the frames do not come till tomorrow. Perhaps they will do something more for the pictures than I can. ⁶⁷

At the end of the year Crane wrote to him. His words are very telling:

I hope...there will be some chance of your being able to get out to Italy...[to] do more of those excellent pictures, and spend a happy life - until politics claim you again. ⁶⁸

Howard was committed to being in London for extended periods of time, but found his enforced lifestyle increasingly onerous. Henry Darvall sympathised:

I can well believe that you find life in London and especially Parliamentary life interferes terribly with painting, the turning night into day must be fearfully trying. I do not wonder you cannot sketch of a morning after it. ⁶⁹

1883 was a year that brought much unhappiness to the Howards; in July the couple's tenth child, their daughter Elizabeth, died in infancy and Howard was shattered by the loss. Morris & Company were commissioned to design a memorial window for St Martin's parish church in Brampton near to Naworth Castle, and Sir Edgar Boehm designed a monument to stand in Lanercost Priory. Howard's grief, compounded by his parliamentary duties, had temporarily distanced him further from painting. A recuperative trip to Italy was advised, as Rosalind Howard recorded in her journal:

...the person to be repaired is George whose nerves, shattered by this year's terrible shock, could not be set up again by Cumberland air...When fairly started for Dover...George's spirits began to rise...to George came back in floodtide all the ardour for drawing which had slept during the last months & he was eager to draw & paint & work...when he draws all good things are added to him. ⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. April 12th 1882

⁶⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. November 14th 1882

⁶⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. June 29th 1883

⁷⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/20. October 21st 1883

Howard had shown two works at the Grosvenor that year: *The Vale of Mentona* and *Autumn in the Old Garden at Naworth*. Although Walter Crane was to congratulate him on his strong showing, he himself was despondent, judging that 'my pictures in the Grosvenor looked disappointing - both of them.'⁷¹ Once in Italy, however, Howard appears to have been instantly revived; he travelled with Costa to his house at Bocca d'Arno, and revelled in its setting:

There, there is a subject for me...We walked near Costa's house...and found several subjects which I hope to do. Then we saw a panorama!⁷²

Over the winter months the Etruscan School 'which recognised Costa as its founder and principal exponent, took definite form and name',⁷³ although its tenets also applied retrospectively to works by members of the group from the decade preceding this formalisation. Howard joined William Blake Richmond, Edgar Barclay, Walter Maclaren, Matthew Ridley Corbett and Walter James to form the School's English contingent. The evenings were taken up with inspirational group discussions, and Howard thrived on the camaraderie and sense of fellowship. A strict regime was undertaken of painting out of doors in the mornings and in the studio during the afternoons. Howard made studies for *The Walls of Rome from Villa Medici*, to be exhibited at the Grosvenor the following year, describing the scene as 'most beautiful but rather impossible'.⁷⁴ He stationed himself on the roof of the villa, recording on one occasion that 'the wind was so cold that I could hardly hold the brush.'⁷⁵ Howard also worked at the 'big long panel for my Sicilian landscape',⁷⁶ for which he had taken studies at an earlier date. It is likely that he also worked at *Temple of Juno* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig. 83) during this visit. He

⁷¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. George Howard to Rosalind Howard, April 27th 1883

⁷² Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. December 12th 1883

⁷³ Agresti, *Giovanni Costa*, p.211. The *scuola* acquired its name from Costa's birthplace of Travestere in ancient Etruria.

⁷⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. December 20th 1883

⁷⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, December 18th 1883

⁷⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, December 20th 1883

made pencil studies of the vegetation on the hilltop beside the temple in a sketchbook dated 1883,⁷⁷ and had been 'looking over a number of photographs in order to find some studies of goats for my...picture.'⁷⁸ This painting, in which a young goatherd rests with his herd amidst the ruins of the temple, retains a similar arcadian ambience to that evinced in works by George Heming Mason and Costa.

Rosalind Howard, who was in Naples with the children, wrote to her husband with an exasperation that was to recur with increasing frequency over the coming months. It set the pattern of accusation and remonstrance that characterised their relationship by the middle of the decade before separation allowed for the reinstatement of a veneer of civility. Having noted that Howard was at work 'amidst your congenial friends', she added:

I think Cecilia must be right when she said... 'What more can father want'. I had fancied there might be something lacking but on thinking it over, perhaps it is as Cecilia says & indeed I hope so for I want you to feel perfectly content.⁷⁹

Howard exhibited three works at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1884, and was pleased that they were well hung.⁸⁰ The previous year had been taxing emotionally but had been rewarding in terms of his painting. The tone of the Grosvenor was changing, however. The Lindsays had separated two years previously; Blanche had withdrawn her investment in the gallery and Coutts Lindsay was left with a heavy financial burden. He was under pressure to find new ways of keeping the Grosvenor in operation whilst maintaining its standards.⁸¹ Without Blanche, however:

...the brilliance with which she had invested the social spectacle at the

⁷⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/113. Unnumbered sketchbook.

⁷⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, December 12th 1883

⁷⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/4. December 17th 1883

⁸⁰ A buyer was found for one of the paintings, but Rosalind Howard prevented the sale from going ahead, declaring that she wished to keep the picture for herself. Her action is likely to have been influenced by Howard's more prominent position in public life, which she may have viewed as being antithetic to commercial gain from his paintings.

⁸¹ Some of the various measures implemented by Lindsay included opening a gentlemen's club, holding musical concerts in the galleries and installing electric lighting.

Grosvenor Gallery...was dimmed and never recaptured.⁸²

In 1884 Lindsay recruited Arthur Wade, and Joseph Pyke⁸³ as business manager. Pyke was willing to take any measures, however unpopular, to consolidate the Grosvenor as a paying concern. He soon came to be regarded with disparagement by Hallé, Carr and the majority of the gallery's exhibiting artists. Discontent grew as Hallé and Carr perceived that they were being undermined in their endeavours to maintain the calibre of the Grosvenor's artistic concerns. Pyke countered their animosity with the assertion that the financial stability of the gallery must remain uppermost and refused to give credence to the concern that the multitude of clubs, dinners and evening events taking place at the gallery would injure its reputation.

Howard was back in Italy with Costa for the spring of 1886. He devoted himself largely to painting *The Palatine* (fig. 84), which he was to show at the Grosvenor the following year. It was to be the last painting he exhibited there. Howard's working day began at six o'clock so that he could be at his site at the Palatine by nine. He would work throughout the day in company with Costa,⁸⁴ who regarded the routine as vital and encouraged him to maintain it for as long as possible, despite Rosalind's mounting irritation at his absence from England. Howard, cast in the role of disciple to Costa, assimilated his advice and willingly tolerated his intervention, finding that working slowly, with the support of his mentor, was 'more use'.⁸⁵

When I am working with Costa progress is slow as he often undoes the work but then the work is worth much more to me in the end.⁸⁶

Nino [Costa] went with me to the Palatine and gave me quite a lesson - I got the new subject (from the bridge)...painted in - it comes rather well...This morning I have been preparing my panel for painting in the Borghese...I find that when I

⁸² Surtees, *Coutts Lindsay*, p.169

⁸³ Pyke was a jeweller who owned business premises on Bond Street, not far from the gallery.

⁸⁴ Costa was painting the same location at the time, which afforded a valuable opportunity for Howard to work unusually closely with him, and one which he felt he 'ought not to neglect'. Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 23rd 1886.

⁸⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, April 1st 1886

⁸⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 2nd 1886

am with Nino there is a good deal more home preparation to be done...but all this is education...⁸⁷

With the foreground of the Palatine painting finished two days later, Howard informed Rosalind that Costa was pleased with it, adding:

I sometimes feel very low indeed about it & it requires considerable obstinacy to go on pegging away. At this moment however I am not so much in the dumps as usual - this is probably owing to Costa's saying that things are going rightly.⁸⁸

Despite his frequent low spirits, which resulted from perennial dissatisfaction with his work and lack of faith in his abilities, he found that, regardless of results, 'the fact of working is always enjoyable',⁸⁹ something which he was unable to say about any other occupation in his life. Howard returned to the Palatine picture when Costa visited him at Castle Howard towards the end of the year. They spent entire days together in the studio, where:

...the days are so much alike that I am beginning to lose count of them. We are working at the Palatine & the Shadow picture and Costa is helping me to improve them as much as you can imagine.⁹⁰

During the latter part of 1886 the Howards reached a hiatus in their relationship and the cracks in their marriage became instead a permanent rift. The catalyst was Howard's prolonged stay in Italy:

...certainly I do not wish these separations to become the 'ordinary' thing but I think that I have had a chance of steady work with Costa which I might not get any other way and which I hope might be sanctified to me.⁹¹

As their correspondence testifies, the decline had started as early as 1882, and circumstances conspired during the decade to accelerate their alienation from one another. The question of Irish Home Rule finally drove a wedge between them which

⁸⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 16th 1886

⁸⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. May 18th 1886

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, November 13th 1886

⁹¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, 27th May 1886

proved impossible to remove.⁹² Howard's deeply-felt sense of bewilderment at Rosalind's refusal to agree to differ over the matter makes painful reading:

It is likely enough as you say that the rest of the year will be unhappy to me...do not add to this trouble by threatening your anger and punishment of a conscientious opinion by loss of love & unkindness of feeling. You do not know how I long for your love & how I wish for a life of friendship & work with you, instead of one of misunderstandings & bitterness of which there have been too many already...Your displeasure cuts into me...⁹³

It was doubly unfortunate that just at the time when Rosalind, at her own suggestion, was assuming greater responsibility for administering the Howard estates, she was encouraged from other quarters to assume a higher profile in the suffrage and temperance movements, which had come to possess an overriding importance for her. Her response to one such instance is couched in a distasteful tone of self-abnegation, witheringly contrasting her own dynamic attributes with her husband's apparent ineffectualness. The letter is suffused with the frustration of misdirected energies and open denigration of him:

Thank you for all your encouragement about myself...Anyway...one does not always choose one's work. In many cases men and women have a certain task placed before them with no option but to undertake it. As George paints, and is only an artist and not a man of action, I must live a practical life and not a life of study and writing and speaking, exciting and alluring as that would be. I dare say I might have been more fully developed with a purely intellectual or political life and I have often thought so, but [as] it was not...in my power to grasp at the life I should have liked best, I must undertake the duty which lies nearest to hand - though it be the homelier one.⁹⁴

Thus the years of encouragement, exhortation and coercion finally reached their inevitable conclusion and Rosalind was forced to recognise that George would never be

⁹² Howard was opposed to Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1885, which provoked a national debate, and aligned himself with the Liberal Unionists. Rosalind was a staunch supporter of Gladstone and found her husband's stance unforgivable. Not only did the schism separate husband and wife, but their children too; from 1886 Howard and five of their sons lived primarily at Naworth whilst Rosalind, their son Geoffrey and their four daughters took up residence at Castle Howard. Each parent maintained close contact with all the children, but the family was never again to be a united entity. Howard turned for consolation to Mary (known to all as Maisie), the wife of Rosalind's brother Lylulph Stanley and daughter of Sir Lowthian Bell. She was his mistress for many years, and her daughter Venetia was believed by many to have been Howard's child.

⁹³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. June 2nd 1886

⁹⁴ Roberts, *Radical Countess*, pp.68-9

the husband she had hoped to shape from the earliest days of their marriage. Hers was the political ambition and hers the yearning for influence and recognition. Though the earlier correspondence between them is peppered with declarations by Howard of his vitality and drive, all too often they were merely a measure of his longing to satisfy her, and proved ultimately fruitless. His emotional dependence upon her had remained a constant, even as late as 1884 when he wrote:

...when I am separated from you...I feel all the time as if I were in a railway station and everything has a temporary and makeshift feel about it...I feel very much as I did twenty years ago, only moreso...⁹⁵

The summer months of 1886 were a period of bitter recrimination during which Howard's painting became a focus for unveiled criticism; Rosalind urged him to vindicate his art, referring to it as a self-indulgence. Howard, who throughout their marriage had voiced his recurrent fears that she would one day despise his meagre achievements, was helpless against her invectives:

You may force me to work hard; you might even force me to stand [for Parliament], though that is an eventuality which I had looked upon as impossible...You say, in effect, that I have no right to take any political action because you made my political position by your energetic working in the past. ..I do not see how, because in the past you have canvassed energetically, not for me but for the Liberal party, you can now require me to efface myself entirely and give no sign. Although I have worked, perhaps poorly, but still to the best of my power, I have at all events devoted many years to the work of the party in the country. [On returning to England] I hope it will not be to a home made wretched by differences...As I told you before I wish in the future to keep as far away from politics as I can...I certainly could not paint while you were propagating and influencing in a direction which seemed to me injurious to the country.⁹⁶

The schism between the Howards had far-reaching implications for their circle of friends; a veil of unease descended that was seldom to be lifted in their later years, and which inevitably entailed choices for those who no longer felt able to perform a perpetual balancing act. Rosalind Howard entered into a lengthy correspondence with her mother on the consequences of the marital division:

I hope [George] will have learnt for the future that Northumberland has no sympathy for seceders. George does not wish for visitors because they would be partisans on one side or another. Guests who were colourlessly neutral would be

⁹⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. February 15th 1884

⁹⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. August 6th 1886

at a premium just now.’⁹⁷

The spontaneity and frankness which had formerly characterised the correspondence between the Burne-Joneses and the Howards became tempered by apprehension about Rosalind’s responses, alluded to in Burne-Jones’ statement that ‘...since I wrote I have regretted making any political allusions exceedingly.’⁹⁸ Howard, in contrast, equably accepted the inevitability that others’ views should differ from his own. Georgiana Burne-Jones, who was in sympathy with Gladstone, wrote to him jocularly:

I may say in passing ‘Long Live Ireland’ which I might not be able to say if you were here to face me, not finding your expression sympathetic.’⁹⁹

Over the years Burne-Jones’ regard for Howard had remained a blend of jocose and boyish affection, wistful confidentiality and professional respect; he valued Howard’s opinion on aesthetic matters, empathised with his lack of motivation in Parliamentary concerns and in short found him altogether an indispensable companion. He had continued to find Howard’s friendship a haven of repose:

Dear child I miss you dreadfully, with everyone else I quarrel, if not on all points at least on some, and with you never...A few evenings before we left [on a Thames excursion] Georgie read aloud to me that divine work of Mazzini which you lent us: it is you with us and is inexpressively sweet...if you were here too it would be so pretty...¹⁰⁰

Although the Burne-Joneses took a long while to reconcile themselves to the fact that one who had been such a staunch friend in the past could now no longer lay claim to her former place in their affections, at last the choice was made and it was inevitably in favour of Howard. Georgiana later recalled her husband’s thoughts on friendship:

He...said plainly what everyone knows, that a friendship may be outgrown. ‘I cut old friends when they fit no more...I can’t wear the clothes I had as a child...what would I be in a braided frock?’¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.144. Rosalind Howard to Lady Stanley, July 1886. In response, her mother wrote: ‘You seem to be in a state in which you should be taken away from your family and placed on a high mountain.’ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁹⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. September 3rd 1887

¹⁰⁰ Castle Howard Archive J22/27. Burne-Jones to Howard, undated.

¹⁰¹ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, pp.13-14

Such was to be Rosalind Howard's fate; having ceased to fit, by the close of the 1880s she was sidelined. Immersed in her temperance and suffrage crusades, Rosalind had new allegiances; these were movements within which she went on to establish a formidable reputation and which received gratefully the zeal which had become resented elsewhere. As their separation became a way of life, Howard was no longer able to confide his hopes and insecurities to Rosalind, and in his correspondence with her the references to his painting are cursory after 1886. Instead, he forged a closer relationship with his daughter Cecilia, who had inherited his artistic eye. She accompanied him on many of his travels, producing work which at its best is barely distinguishable from his own.

The final decline and closure of the Grosvenor Gallery

As preparations for the Grosvenor's 1887 exhibition were underway, Howard received an anxious letter from Matthew Ridley Corbet. Having requested particular paintings from both Costa and W.B. Richmond, the gallery had failed to hang all of them. It had been evident for some time that Lindsay was less directly involved with the day-to-day running of the gallery than hitherto, and in Ridley's opinion 'it is Pyke's gallery now and everything is on a different footing.'¹⁰² Burne-Jones reluctantly expressed in letter form what many of the Grosvenor's regularly-exhibiting artists had been thinking for some time past. He wrote to Hallé, voicing his concerns and requesting that his unease that the reputation of the gallery was slipping be conveyed to Lindsay:

...the place has got a character of its own, & its name has been respected, and I do seriously feel that this is being imperilled by the innovations of this last season, & that steadily the gallery is losing caste...Can you hint this my vexation to Sir Coutts. I am wrapped up in the place, and cannot and would not disentangle.¹⁰³

Hallé and Carr were ranged resolutely against Wade and Pyke in deploring the extent to which ill-assorted commercial ventures had proliferated at the Grosvenor:

...the Picture Exhibition seems to be regarded by the Directors as a mere adjunct to a Restaurant...the Gallery was let out almost every night during the

¹⁰² Castle Howard Archive, J22/33. Corbet to Howard, April 26th 1887

¹⁰³ Castle Howard Archive, October 3rd 1887. This extract is taken from a transcript of Burne-Jones's proposed letter to Charles Hallé, which is dated October 10th.

season...as though it were a sort of Willis's Rooms. ¹⁰⁴

The situation deteriorated until Hallé and Carr felt their positions to be untenable. At the end of October they tendered their resignation, having been forewarned by Burne-Jones that he would be forced to withdraw as an exhibitor if no concessions were forthcoming from Lindsay regarding the gallery's unequal balance of power. With the crisis-point now having been reached, in November Burne-Jones wrote to Howard, seeking to enlist his support for the setting up of a new gallery (See Appendix 2).

Hallé and Carr, having faced the disparagement of both public and press, who were largely supportive of Lindsay, now implemented their plans to co-direct a new gallery, which would stand in opposition to the Grosvenor. It would operate on similar lines to those upon which the Grosvenor had originally been founded. In December 1887 Hallé asked Howard to take debentures in the new gallery and invited him to send to its inaugural exhibition. Burne-Jones, as leader of the secession, also wrote urging him to exhibit there, as did Corbet, who informed Howard that both he and Costa intended to submit paintings. These requests for a show of support from Howard came at an awkward time; he was being asked to be publicly partisan against Lindsay, to whom he felt indebted, and was harrassed by the prospect. He had been involved with the plans for the Grosvenor at its inception and was loth to turn his back on it. He chose a middle way and exhibited at neither institution in 1888, replying to Hallé's letter from the safe distance of Luxor. Knowing nothing about either the constitution of the new company or who its members were likely to be, he declined to take debentures in it. He stated that he had been unable to finish the picture he had been working on prior to leaving England, adding that he had nothing to send for inclusion in the New Gallery's first exhibition. He had, on Thomas Armstrong's advice, been re-working his earlier watercolour *View from the front of Saint John Lateran, Rome* (Tate Gallery) (fig. 85), and had 'taken out a big figure'.¹⁰⁵ Correspondence testifies that he indeed had no new work to exhibit, so his

¹⁰⁴ Charles Hallé to Sir Coutts Lindsay. *Daily Telegraph*, January 27th 1888, p.5, The *Daily Telegraph* printed a detailed account of the correspondence between the principal protagonists relating to events leading up to Hallé and Carr's decision to resign their positions at the Grosvenor Gallery.

¹⁰⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, April 4th 1888

refusal to show at the New Gallery may have been less strategic than it at first appears. However, this caution on Howard's part nettled Burne-Jones.

On his return to England from Egypt in the spring of 1888, Howard visited the inaugural exhibition at the New Gallery in Regent Street in the company of Georgiana and Margaret Burne-Jones. Hallé and Carr had mounted an exhibition which included many names formerly synonymous with the Grosvenor including Watts, Millais, Alma-Tadema and William Blake Richmond, in addition to Burne-Jones. Howard also paid a visit to the Grosvenor, where he found that:

It is a 'degringolade.' There are a few good pictures but the tone is out of the place.¹⁰⁶

Its decline was by now accelerating and Howard was to exhibit there no more. Lindsay still appeared to retain his optimism about the gallery's future, but by 1889 it was evident to all that the opening of a lending library and ticket agency there were acts of economic desperation. The summer exhibition of 1890 was to be the Grosvenor Gallery's last. Unwilling to show there again, Howard was now forced to approach Hallé and Carr to discuss submitting his work to future exhibitions at the New Gallery. A period of awkwardness ensued during which Burne-Jones made the most of Howard's discomfort; writing to Matthew Ridley Corbet, Howard confided that:

Ned wrote to Hallé to say what fun it was that I had been obliged to come down and how good he (Hallé) was to forgive me! or words to that effect. Of course I felt this before...As I have nowhere else to exhibit it is necessary to eat humble pie but the diet though possibly wholesome is not appetising.¹⁰⁷

Following this initial spell of unease Howard became a regular exhibitor at the New Gallery, along with the other members of the Etruscan School. Indeed, in 1894 he was again called upon by Hallé to become a shareholder in the gallery, so that in the event of anything happening to either himself or Carr, the institution would be in the hands of those who 'not only care but know something about art'.¹⁰⁸ He added that the gallery's future stability was dependent upon 'the shares being held by men like yourself and not by mere men of business.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 11th 1888

¹⁰⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/533. Howard to Corbet, March 8th 1889

¹⁰⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/79. January 22nd 1894

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

The final phase: the New Gallery years and *A Picture Song Book*

The New Gallery, in Regent Street, was erected with remarkable speed to a design by architect Edward Robert Robson (1835-1917):

The effect of that Central Court with its fountain fringed with flowers and its arcade panelled with fine, coloured marbles, was one of the sensations of the day, and deserved the praise of a critic: 'It is an Aladdin's Palace sprung up in the night.'¹

Halle and Carr were to co-direct the gallery, which attracted many of the Grosvenor regulars to exhibit, chief amongst whom were Burne-Jones and Watts. The New Gallery, which opened in May 1888, was perceived as 'having succeeded to the cachet that was once the Grosvenor's'.² Howard was much impressed by the inaugural exhibition, observing:

...the best pictures are by Costa and Legros...Legros has resurrected.³

Howard was to travel increasingly far afield over the coming years, visiting the Caribbean, America, India and South Africa. In 1889 he exhibited at the New Gallery's second show, with three paintings that had resulted from his trip to Egypt in the opening months of 1888: *The Mountain of the Tombs, Thebes, The Nile at Luxor (Castle Howard Collection)* (fig. 86), and *Afterglow on the Temple of Ammon, Luxor*. Howard also showed two cases of bronze medals at the same exhibition, largely of family members. Legros led the art medal revival during the mid-1880s, and although Howard had ultimately found himself at odds with his teaching methods, the two had remained friends. It is likely that it was Legros who coached Howard in medal-making, as he had done Maria Zambaco, who had herself exhibited two cases of medals at the New Gallery the previous year.

The Etruscan School showed in force at the show, and when the Italian painter Angelo

¹ Alice Comyns Carr, *J. Comyns Carr*, p.80

² *Art J.*, 51 (1889), p.192, quoted in Denney, *Grosvenor Gallery (Exh. London & Denver)*, 1996, p.92

³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 6th 1888

Torchi visited the exhibition, he found:

‘the cream of English art’ within which ‘Costa certainly has a place, and in fact a school of followers of his own; all these exhibitions (referring also to the Grosvenor Gallery and the Royal Academy) are adorned with small paintings [by Costa’s followers] and you can recognise them at first glance by the line of the landscape which is always Bocca d’Arno as seen through English eyes.’⁴

As well as showing at the New Gallery, Howard finally exhibited at the Royal Academy this year. He was ambivalent about showing there, and had deliberated about whether or not to risk the rejection of his submission:

Now the question is whether I should try the Roman picture at the Academy. They would not be likely to accept it but that would not do me much harm.⁵

The painting was *The Alban Hills from the Palatine*. He was to exhibit there again the following year, with *The Sacred Lake, Karnack* (of which he painted two versions, figs 87 & 88) (Castle Howard Collection), which was well hung, ‘above the line, but not very high.’⁶ Howard returned to Italy in September, staying at Bellinzona. He was elated to be back, and wrote of the invigorating hive of activity that was Bocca d’Arno:

The studios are like a rabbit warren with painters going in & out with palettes and brushes.⁷

Howard was at the heart of this vibrant artists’ community, and his stay evolved into a time of confidence. He declared that ‘I am sure that I am getting good from working near to Nino.’⁸ He felt swamped with subjects to paint, as ‘on all sides the place is beautiful’, and he found it difficult to limit himself to even one or two:

There is a creeper on the battlements of the town wall of the most brilliant red imaginable. No-one would believe it in a picture...but I shall stick to my subject by the river.⁹

⁴ Letter to Telemaco Signorini, quoted in Newall, *The Etruscans* (Exh. Stoke on Trent), 1989, p.24

⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, March 12th 1889

⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/33. Corbet to Howard, April 28th 1890

⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, October 8th 1889

⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, October 12th 1889

⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, September 30th 1889

Howard worked primarily on *Bellinzona* during this visit, under close supervision from Costa. It was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1890, along with *Claude's Villa, on the Tiber*, which was hung 'on the line, looks first rate.'¹⁰ The catalogue described it as 'one of two very interesting landscapes by this painter.'¹¹

The early- to mid-1890s saw the apogee of Howard's artistic achievement. In 1891 he exhibited *The Fort at Bocca D'Arno* (fig. 89) (Castle Howard Collection) and *The Edge of the Pine Forest, Pisa* (fig. 42) at the New Gallery. *The Edge of the Pine Forest*, enlivened only by wild boars, broods with a weighty melancholy accentuated by the stillness of the water and trees. In the former painting, which adheres to the Etruscan format of elongated panorama, the ruined fort is an unimposing building which stands in the middle distance to the extreme right of the painting. In the foreground lies the elevated and windswept bank of the Arno where a stand of broken pine trees has grown up through the sandy soil and scant vegetation. Across the river the low-lying land is clothed in reeds and stunted pines. Misty blue mountains rise above the plain, which lies beyond another stretch of water. This lonely landscape is bathed in the warm light of sunset, which softens the contours of the panorama. The conceit of a bird in flight emphasises the eerie quiet. Howard took his own photographs of the view (Private Collection), from which, along with his oil sketches, he would square up a finished pencil study (fig. 90) (Private Collection) from which to work.

A View within the Baths of Caracalla at Rome (Government Art Collection) (fig. 91) is also likely to date from the early 1890s.¹² It was a location to which Howard had returned on many occasions, painting a watercolour of the ruins during his first visit in 1866 (fig. 92). The oil, painted over two decades later, is one of accomplishment and complex perspective, with strong horizontal and vertical rhythms. It depicts two Italian women in provincial dress lounging atop the ruins of the ancient vaulted thermae. In the middle distance of the painting, buildings from more recent periods straggle along the declivity between the shallow hills towards the open countryside, dwarfed by the ruins

¹⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/33. Corbet to Howard, April 28th 1890

¹¹ Blackburn (ed.), *New Gallery Notes*, 1889, p.7

¹² See Castle Howard Archive, J22/113, sketchbook XXX for pencil studies. Undated.

amidst which they have evolved. The church of San Gregorio Magno, with its seventeenth-century facade, stands to the left of the canvas. Ancient and modern Italy are indissolubly melded.

At the end of 1891 Howard travelled to India on the S.S. *Britannia*, making a number of studies of coastlines, from which he planned to paint a panorama when he returned home. He made the journey several times during the 1890s, to visit his son Hubert, who was stationed there with the Eighth Bengal Lancers. Burne-Jones had written to him before his departure, offering to obtain paints for him should his supply run out:

I can do anything for you in London - get you any colours for instance - and have them packed properly or ask Val Prinsep who has worked there if there is any way of keeping the tubes from drying up...¹³

At Oodeypore he was 'working very hard and have had no time to dawdle'.¹⁴

Howard's Indian paintings are reminiscent of Holman Hunt, with their cloudless blue skies and raking shadows on sandstone. Indeed, he was later to advise Estella Canziani that 'When painting [in] the East the shadows cannot be too blue in sunlight',¹⁵ and when in Egypt he undertook a series of experimental monochrome drawings in which he examined the effects of bright sunshine and deep shadow on the broken contours of the Egyptian mountains (figs 92a & b) (Castle Howard Collection). Some of Howard's early Italian paintings tended towards a somewhat saccharine palette, particularly noticeable in those works with prominent figure content (figs 72 & 73). However, in his purer landscapes Howard paid great attention to local colour, adjusting his palette with sensitivity: his English landscapes are composed largely of muted greens, many of his Italian paintings have a yellow-based palette and his Indian and Egyptian works a warm palette of browns and umbers (figs 93 to 95a).

Howard exhibited only two studies in 1892, and nothing the following year. In 1894, however, he showed five works at the New Gallery, the principal one being the deeply-atmospheric oil painting *The Castle of Rajputana* (Castle Howard Collection) (fig. 96),

¹³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

¹⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, December 30th 1891

¹⁵ Canziani, *Round about Three Palace Green*, p.382

described in the catalogue as 'a calm green 'tank' in which Hindoo [sic] women are bathing, and drawing water'.¹⁶ Depicted in the fading light of dusk, the castle ramparts rise from the waters and the mass of the castle itself, built upon a hill, casts the far side of the lake into shadow with its deep-toned reflection. The small group of women cause ripples to radiate gently across the tranquil lake, and the eye is arrested by waterfowl rising from the surface of the water. The figures are loosely painted, with none of Howard's earlier photographic accuracy. The woman crouching in the shallows lends the painting an air of mysticism comparable with that exhibited by the stooping hooded figure in *Trafalgar Bay from Tangier* (Private Collection) (fig. 97), painted six years later. Howard exhibited *Bhopal* and the companion painting to *The Castle of Rajputana, The Peshola Lake, Oodeypore* (Castle Howard Collection) at the New Gallery in 1895. *The Peshola Lake* is a view from the opposite side of the same lake, and equals its pair in atmosphere and tone.

From the second half of the 1890s, Howard executed a number of paintings which assimilated a greater topographical and documentary flavour once again, and call to mind his watercolours of the mid-1870s. Howard's health, always delicate, forced him to recuperate at such places as Wurtemberg and Bad Nauheim on the Rhine, which he recorded in paint (fig. 98). Evidently he found little to inspire him in the scenery surrounding the former:

This place is not a success. We went for a long drive yesterday & saw some pretty villages, but endless pine woods are monotonous.¹⁷

He maintained his usual practice of sketching and painting as much as possible, but there is a note of fatigue in his correspondence which seems to hint at resignation. From Hyeres he wrote:

I spent the day sketching & am discontented with my work.¹⁸

¹⁶ Blackburn (ed.), *New Gallery Notes*, 1894, p.4

¹⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, May 26th 1897. Swathes of Teutonic pine forests cloaking a flat landscape evidently produced a very different effect from Italy's pine woods, which perennially thrilled him.

¹⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, February 26th 1897

and from Nauheim:

'I have been painting all day lately but not doing well - I began a thing at Frieberg but the subject was too big for the time.'¹⁹

Howard was to exhibit only twice more, showing his *Scene in India* in 1897 and *Valley of the Tombs, Assuan* at the New Gallery in 1900.

The 1890s brought the deaths of two of Howard's sons, as well as the loss of many of his closest friends, and there followed for Howard a period of retrospection. The world was 'getting very empty as the lights of our youthful days and friends of all days go out one after another.'²⁰ He busied himself with serving on committees and assisting with exhibitions. Ever-concerned with the standing of art in education, he acted as President of the International Art Congress,²¹ Chairman of the British Institution Scholarships Board (1899) and President of the Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Handicrafts Company.²² He served on the Ruskin Memorial Committee (1900) and worked tirelessly in connection with the foundation of the Tate Gallery. Howard's connoisseurship was widely acknowledged: apart from serving as a Trustee of the National Gallery and on the committee of the Chantrey Bequest, he advised Thomas Armstrong on several new acquisitions for the South Kensington Museum, and maintained close contact with the National Gallery of New South Wales²³ in this regard. He also became involved with the Society for the Preservation of Monuments in Ancient Egypt. In 1893 Howard was

¹⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, June 15th 1897

²⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/31. Sidney Colvin to Howard. Undated

²¹ The Secretary of the International Art Congress wrote to Rosalind Howard following her husband's death, asking her to accept a bronze relief portrait of him. He acknowledged Howard's role as 'the greatly esteemed President of the Congress, at which, by his knowledge and his genial courtesy he greatly endeared himself to many hundreds of Art teachers both British and Foreign.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/140. June 20th 1912

²² The Handicrafts Co. was established in 1899 by Newcastle's Art Committee, which placed the venture under the supervision of R.G. Hatton. It was a non profit-making venture, with the members' annual subscriptions being used for working capital. It aimed to promote the study and production of useful and beautiful objects, made by hand.

²³ Howard was responsible for the gallery's purchase of Matthew Ridley Corbet's *Perugia*. He was urged by Corbet to join the committee for selecting works of art for the National Gallery of New South Wales. He did so, and the association continued for over a decade. Castle Howard Archive, J22/82.

approached by Sydney Cockerell, who wished to rejuvenate the scheme initiated by Ruskin whereby pictorial records of buildings vulnerable to decay or restoration were commissioned and placed in museum collections. The scheme had made a strong start in 1878, and a group of artists had been trained under Ruskin to undertake the task, but no new additions had been made since he fell ill in 1887. Money for the scheme was to be raised by subscription and Cockerell wished for two figures of sufficient standing in the arts to act as consultants. Wishing to avoid the red tape of committees, he asked that Howard and Burne-Jones ensure the wise expenditure of funds:

I wish to be able to say that no money will be spent without the advice and approval of yourself and Mr Burne-Jones. This will, I am sure, satisfy subscribers²⁴

Howard agreed to act as joint-consultant and the scheme was resurrected.

In 1897 William Rothenstein instigated a subscription of £200 for the Tate Gallery's purchase of Legros' *Femmes en Prière* (1888), which had been exhibited at the New Gallery but remained unsold:

The price was...absurdly modest...I approached some influential people, and an appeal was sent out - Watts at once sent £50. Lord Carlisle saw Burne-Jones and other old friends of Legros, the money was quickly subscribed, and Holroyd was delighted to have *Les Femmes en Priere* for the new Tate Gallery.²⁵

Howard was not only a willing subscriber to such funds; he was also a leading force in many instances. Two years later, in 1899, Howard was instrumental in the acquisition for the nation of Costa's painting *Il Risveglio*. It was purchased by a committee of artists and presented to the National Gallery, the first painting by a living artist to enter its collections. *Il Risveglio* was an archetypal Etruscan work of a location painted many times by members of the School. The setting, near the mouth of the Arno with the pine woods of San Rossore beyond, was first beheld by Costa in 1859 during his military service, and in working on the painting he had returned repeatedly at daybreak to capture the light as dawn broke.

²⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/30. Cockerell to Howard, August 18th 1893

²⁵ Rothenstien, *Men and Memories*, (1943 edn), p.255

MISSING

PAGES

NOT

AVAILABLE

published in 1910 as *A Picture Song Book*³² and contained sixty-four colour plates produced from watercolours by Howard. He insisted on inserting the following introductory note, expressing his ambivalence towards the book's reception:

When I did the illustrations for the Songs in the country for the amusement of my grandchildren, I had no idea that they would be reproduced or published. I hope that this may be considered an extenuating circumstance.³³

Many of the book's illustrations hark back to earlier days: *Early one Morning* was a subject Howard had first tackled in the 1860s, *La Biondina in Gondoletta* (fig. 99) recalls his times in Venice with Darvall, and numerous are the unmistakable depictions of a youthful Rosalind from the days of early marital contentment. Several of the settings for the illustrations are places dear to Howard's heart: *Ye Maidens Pretty*, for instance, takes an oak-panelled tower room reminiscent of that designed by Webb at Naworth for its setting (fig. 100).³⁴ Miss M. Milne, an associate from the sketching trips at Bocca d'Arno during the 1880s, wrote to Howard:

Would it interest you to know the pictures I like best? 'Early one Morning' is a gem - what I particularly like is the movement of the figures...they walk and dance so delightfully - one feels that the girl is walking and singing in the fresh dawn and at the same time there is a feeling of loneliness well expressed in the picture.³⁵

A Picture Song Book contains two self-portraits (figs 101 & 102). In the first, Howard depicts himself as a stooped and diminutive old man standing with three of his grandchildren in an indefinable end-of-day autumn landscape. He presents a weighty book - his book of songs - to them. It is the modest gift of a modest man. There are no trappings of status here, nothing to indicate that Howard is anything more or less than the children's grandfather. The second portrait depicts the same children gathered round a piano, performing one of the songs from the book. The setting is particularly

³² *A Picture Song Book* was published in a limited edition of two hundred and fifty by Smith, Elder & Co.

³³ Howard, *A Picture Song Book*, introductory note (unpaginated)

³⁴ 'Mr Philip Webb was staying at [Naworth] Castle...He had been designing some interior oak fittings, and had made a delightful panelled room for Lady Carlisle in one of the towers.' Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences*, p.202

³⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/68. December 15th 1910

interesting; above the piano hang three large paintings, tantalisingly indistinct. They could be by anyone, and are one last statement of self-effacement by Howard. Squeezed into a narrow space to the right of the picture, Howard departs through the doorway alone. The space into which he steps is not a hallway or another room, however, but a dusky landscape, his life's twilight. The poignancy of this final plate was not lost on Howard's old friend Stopford Brooke:

Everyone who knows you must feel your special sentiment and imagination in every drawing...I can't say how much this has impressed me, nor how much of ancient pleasure it has given me...I felt the last drawing of the departing figure in my inward life.³⁶

Brooke's letter touched on the two things which had given Howard's life its meaning: art and the fellowship of friendship. William Rothenstein was later to recall a visit to Stopford Brooke's home; his description of the house places Howard at the heart of both:

Large prints of Rome and huge Italian woodcuts filled the hall...In the dining room and drawing room were paintings by Legros, Giovanni Costa, Lord Carlisle and Walter Crane...[and] drawings by Burne-Jones and Rossetti...³⁷

A Picture Song Book met with modest acclaim. Letters from friends and family alike enthused about its illustrations, as did the press reviews.³⁸ Each acknowledged Howard's standing as a landscape painter (although it was to his watercolours, not his oils, that they referred), and emphasised the more challenging nature of figure composition. It came as an apparent surprise to them that Howard should show 'an inventive faculty and facility of design of no mean order.'³⁹

A year later, on April 16th 1911 George Howard died suddenly of heart failure at his beloved London home, Palace Green. His body was brought back to Naworth by Rosalind, where it rested overnight in the library beneath the bas relief of Flodden Field before being interred at Lanercost Priory nearby.

³⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/68. October 27th 1910

³⁷ Rothenstein, *Men and Memories* (1934 edn), p.31

³⁸ See Appendix 3

³⁹ *The Standard*, December 1910

PART II

**HOWARD AS PATRON - TWO
PRINCIPAL COMMISSIONS**

CHAPTER 7

Howard, Philip Speakman Webb and 1 Palace Green

1 Palace Green (1868-72) was Webb's first major architectural commission from Howard, who proved himself an ideal client; sufficiently discerning to desire a building of true architectural merit, yet young enough to be guided by Webb's sheer force of character and faith in the resulting design. Although Howard had a compliant manner, it was underpinned by a resilient tenacity upon which he had repeated cause to draw during the ensuing months. The planning process would be prolonged and confrontational and appears, with hindsight, as an ominous precursor of the similar vicissitudes which were to hamper the building of St Martin's church at Brampton a decade later. Howard's dogged championing of Webb was of great significance in both cases; had his resolve been weaker or his faith in Webb less firmly placed, both Palace Green and St Martin's would have borne far less resemblance to their original designs.

Cited below are extensive extracts from the correspondence between the various parties who played a part in the planning and eventual completion of Palace Green. These not only examine in greater detail than has hitherto been the case the dynamics of the feud overshadowing the commission, but also serve to map the development of Howard's relationship with Webb and its transfiguration from architect-client to a mutuality of purpose and empathy. Wherever possible, material has been included which illustrates the ideological and ethical principles informing Webb's architectural practices as embodied by Palace Green, particularly where such material has not been previously cited elsewhere.

The architectural merits of Palace Green have been examined in several publications. My intention is not to replicate these evaluations by advocating its significance from a purely architectural standpoint, but rather to present a detailed analysis of *how* the building came into being, and its resulting legacy both for those concerned directly in its design and execution, and in a broader context. Owing to Howard's unique position at the very heart of the former Oxford Set, issues of design detail were discussed in personal correspondence between those concerned with a rare freedom and informality (and at

times with a humour) which provide illuminating insights into the work-practices of all involved.

The collation of material from a multiplicity of sources has enabled the construction of a more in-depth insight into the aesthetic and practical concerns which governed the evolution of the building's interior, than has hitherto been the case.

The architect

To quote W.R. Lethaby, whose record of Webb, *Philip Webb and his Work*, was based frankly and openly on his 'uncritical admiration and reverence' for this 'architect as hero',¹ Webb embarked on his career as an architect at a time when his predecessors and contemporaries:

For the most part...followed the movement - backward - of attempting to 'revive the Gothic style of design' rather than settling down to perfect a science of modern building²

Lethaby christened Webb the architectural member of the later Pre-Raphaelite group,³ a title aptly reflected by his early commissions.⁴ The rapturous reception of Webb's design for William and Janey Morris' first married home, Red House, assured him of a committed, if small, client-base from the outset of his career in 1859. These were without exception artists or artist-patrons; his early commissions all came from members, or former members, of the exclusive Hogarth Club.⁵ They formed an artistic elite which

¹ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.1

² Ibid. p.63

³ Ibid. pp.1-2

⁴ By 1867, when Howard and Webb met, Webb's domestic commissions to date consisted of Red House for Morris, 1859; Sandroyd in Surrey for Spencer Stanhope, 1860; Arisaig House near Inverness for F.D.P. Astley, begun in 1863; and 14 Holland Park Road for Valentine Prinsep, 1864.

⁵ The Hogarth Club, which was founded in 1858 and continued until 1861, was a membership club where artists could meet and show their paintings to a restricted audience, exhibition space being hired at the Dudley Gallery. Four such exhibitions were held in all. Members were largely drawn from the exponents or successors of Pre-Raphaelitism. Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown and Holman Hunt were amongst its founders. Philip Webb was a sometime trustee.

envisioned a future transcending the narrow dictates of tradition, and many of them were later to become associated with the Grosvenor and New Galleries, disregarding the supremacy of the Royal Academy. To this core clientele was added, in 1865, the Bell dynasty of self-made industrialists from the North East, at which date Webb executed additions to Sir Lothian Bell's home in County Durham, Washington Hall. Clients such as the Bells, the recipients of industry's freshly-forged wealth, were ready to ally themselves with progressive figures in the arts who stood outside the pale of the establishment; they were investing in a new vision for the nation, aesthetic as well as industrial, and were not constricted by the sensibilities of those with longer-established pedigrees. They often looked less to the past than to the present, both in the homes they commissioned to be built and the pictures with which they filled them; paintings by old masters commonly held less allure than those by living artists with whom they could forge a patronage that was reciprocally beneficial. Howard did not fall comfortably into either category, being a fledgling yet aristocratic artist. However, the sincerity of his dedication to matters aesthetic could be vouched for by Burne-Jones and his knowledge of architecture must also have acted in his favour in Webb's eyes.

Webb is known to have harboured entrenched and scathing views of the aristocracy:

Breeding is absolutely essential but it is applicable to all manner of results; unfortunately the present form of high breeding produced such low results...The most marked characteristic of such an aristocracy is its delight in being bored by bores and its interest in vain pursuits. ⁶

Webb was once introduced by Morris as 'the man who taught me socialism'.⁷ He was later to act as treasurer of the Bloomsbury branch of the Socialist League and veered, as did Morris, towards a conviction that the inevitable curative for society's ills was anarchy.⁸

⁶ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.254

⁷ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.241

⁸ After his death the outline of a paper was found, written circa 1885. One of the passages is as follows: 'Supposing that the various forms of authority had succeeded in giving a fairly satisfactory life to the masses, there might be some excuse for endeavouring to continue them; but as they have evidently and miserably failed, the masses are bound as honest men to displace authority which has proved itself incapable.' Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.243

Webb...had embraced holy poverty. He thought that the worst rot of the age was greed...To give, not to take, was the ideal. The Socialism of these men was a religion of works as well as of faith. ⁹

Though finding in Howard a client of anomalous status in relation to his own Socialist convictions, Webb was drawn to the younger man despite himself. In his turn, it is probable that Howard was attracted by Webb's anti-establishmentarianism, for he himself, though born into society's elite, was at odds with many of its precepts, not least the presupposition that he was to ensure the continuity of previous generations both politically and ideologically. Howard, like the second-generation Pre-Raphaelites with whom he aligned himself, was less concerned with the preservation of what they unanimously regarded as a poor *status quo* than with joining in their crusade of aesthetic betterment for the nation. His relationship with Webb, though occasionally uneasy due to an excess of causticity on the latter's part, was soon founded on a reciprocal camaraderie and respect.

For Webb, architecture was firmly rooted in the folk traditions of Britain's localities where the transparency of honest expression had produced buildings of spontaneous sincerity:

The great architectures of the past had been noble customary ways of building, naturally developed by the craftsmen engaged in the actual works...it is the very opposite of the 'whim' designs we are all so excited about exhibiting...architecture is building traditionally. There can be no arts of the old kind until by some means folk traditions are once more regained so that builders and employers accept the natural expression of the moment. ¹⁰

Each of the buildings commissioned by George Howard exemplified this credo in its

⁹ Ibid. p.243

¹⁰ Ibid. p.121

own unique way.¹¹

Since they owed no allegiance to popular trends or expectations of the day, it is unsurprising that Webb's designs were often comprised of an unpredictable amalgum of stylistically independent elements. It was therefore to be anticipated that those designs not executed for individual clients at one with his own ethos, or at the very least willing to accommodate his eccentricities in the name of architectural integrity, would be likely to give rise to perplexity and hostility. As Webb's career progressed, his experience proved the rashness of undertaking commissions which involved 'outsiders' or committees. Without the strongest of recommendations or a personal introduction, it could be difficult to meet him, much less to commission work from him. This deliberate exclusivity arose in part from Webb's unconquerable shyness, but was also founded on perennial anxiety arising from an act of misjudgment early in his career, when he had undertaken a commission from a comparative stranger. He had written to George Price Boyce about that design's unfortunate reception:

I hear this morning that he is much obliged, but that some of the design he does not like, and the rest is unsuitable...¹²

Throughout his career Webb ensured that his designs were seldom exhibited or published.¹³ Likewise, he refused to enter open competition; instead, clients found

¹¹ For example, Four Gables, the house commissioned in 1876 for the agent of the Naworth estate. It is, as its name suggests, a square building with four gables, which took for its inspiration the border pele tower. Given the importance attached by Webb to the history of site and locality, his musings regarding the issue of naming the house merit quoting at length: 'Truly it is difficult to find a really good name for a house, one that shall be significant and yet not affected...I've searched the large Ordnance Survey map and find no useful suggestion as all the names there are evidently pertinent to place and circumstance...What say you to Fourgables [sic] as the name for the house? I suggested it to Morris, who is difficult to please in these matters, and he, on seeing the design for the house, said it would be a very good name for it. I should like it very well as there is not likely to be so marked a four-gable building in another part of the neighbourhood.' (Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Webb to Rosalind Howard, December 7th 1878).

¹² Swenarton, *Artists and Architects*, p.38

¹³ He did, however, exhibit at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society which sought to establish a proper status for the artist-craftworker and designer. Morris & Company, the Century Guild, the Guild and School of Handicraft, Walter Crane and W.A.S. Benson were amongst the exhibitors, as well as the free-thinking young architects who had founded the Art Worker's Guild in 1884. There were craft demonstrations for working men, the Society having a distinctly Socialist flavour.

themselves competing for his services. His uniquely dictatorial architect-client ethos was related to Lethaby by F.A. White:

I sought an interview to feel his pulse about accepting me as his client...he bid me reflect that he was very despotic, that he would never make a concession he might think unwise to economy, nor please his client at the expense of his conscience. Had I not better think twice before committing myself to one who might become my taskmaster? ¹⁴

Indeed, in 1877, upon being asked by Howard to undertake a commission for a gazebo at Castle Howard, he responded:

I will do what I think right...but I will mind your objections no more than the braying of your peacock. ¹⁵

It would seem beyond question that Webb offered his self-avowed social inadequacy as a measure of absolution for his gaucheness in handling either personal or professional confrontations. His inability to accommodate compromise evolved to form a metaphorical armour which enabled him to appear impervious to the criticisms of those whom he considered either offensive personally, or unco-operative professionally. The portrait which he was careful to paint of himself as 'a natural born boor'¹⁶ impossible to tame, served to cushion him in uncomfortable situations. One one occasion, thinking that he had offended Rosalind Howard, he wrote in quasi-apology for his rudeness:

I...will write down myself as gratuitously brutal and as Beau Brummel's valet did with his master's cravats, I will label it in my mind as one of my failures. ¹⁷

His was a carefully constructed facade that confounded many, and it is perhaps unsurprising that Rosalind evaluated him thus:

Morris...talks so clearly and seems to think so clearly that what seems paradox in Webb's mouth, in his seems convincing sense. ¹⁸

Within these peculiar parameters, accepted by all clients, Webb received tacit consent to

¹⁴ Lethaby, *Phillip Webb*, p.116

¹⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. June 18th 1877

¹⁶Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Webb to Howard, February 19th 1869

¹⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64, January 2nd 1869

¹⁸ McEvoy (*Archit, J.*, 190 (1989), p.50). Source uncited.

exercise *carte-blanche* when undertaking a commission, once the client's specified requirements had been established. This architect-client collusion fostered a mystique which in its turn significantly enhanced Webb's desirability as an architect. His designs were so keenly sought after that throughout the forty years of his career he was never without a commission in hand. However, his refusal to diminish his autonomy by employing more than one or two assistants at once, resulted in meagre earnings for much of the time.

Quality and function reigned supreme in Webb's designs, form being dictated by his instinctive response to siting and orientation, and his interpretative mastery of style and historicism. One cannot do better than Lethaby's summary of the man and his art:

A very inventive imagination was at all times struggling with an austere restraint which feared unmeaning expression.¹⁹

Design and planning permission

Following their marriage in 1864, it soon became clear that George and Rosalind Howard would require a London residence of their own. Initially they spent their time in the capital at Park Street with his grandparents, Lord and Lady Wensleydale. However, by 1866 they already had two children and this arrangement, however amicable, became increasingly unsuitable. From 1865, Howard visited Burne-Jones almost daily at his studio and regularly accompanied him to sketch at the South Kensington Museum. The following year he enrolled as a pupil at the South Kensington School of Design. In November 1866 Alphonse Legros succeeded Burne-Jones as Howard's tutor, and advised him that he should continue to execute detailed accurate studies and minimise composition for some time to come. This would mean continued sketching sessions at South Kensington and attendance at life classes at Heatherley's art school in Newman Street, where he enrolled in 1867.

Having once begun their search for a home of their own, the Howards inspected several

¹⁹ Morris, G (*Archit. Rev.*, 2 (1897), p.200)

properties, including one in Cromwell Place next door to Millais and another opposite the South Kensington Museum which, however convenient the location, proved unsuitable for unspecified reasons. It would seem that after prolonged and fruitless searching Rosalind Howard advocated taking a new and unfurnished house which they could alter as necessary. The progression from this suggestion to that of having a house designed to cater for their specific needs was a logical one, following their visit to Valentine Prinsep's newly-finished studio house at 1 Holland Park Road (fig. 103). The house, designed by Webb, made a deep impression on them both and emphasised the advantages of a bespoke residence. Prinsep's home was akin to the red brick parsonage style which characterised Webb's early work, epitomised by Red House and Sandroyd. Elements of 1 Holland Park Road, such as the steeply pitched roof and gabled porch and windows, were to be repeated at Palace Green. Perhaps because it appeared harmoniously gothic in character and had not been erected on Crown land, 1 Holland Park Road caused none of the criticisms which were to be levelled at Webb's forthcoming design for Howard.

Howard was keen to live in Kensington, parts of which retained an air of almost rural tranquillity, although the building boom which began in the 1850s had already tranfigured a large proportion of it. The area was also highly convenient for attendance at South Kensington Museum, besides being within easy reach of Burne-Jones's home in Kensington Square. It would also place him in close proximity to the growing artist colony associated with West Kensington at Holland Park and Campden Hill. In 1864 Frederic Leighton had employed George Aitchison to design his home at 2 Holland Park Road, adjacent to Prinsep's house. Both houses were highly original in character, with the principal facing material in each case being brick. Those houses in Holland Park and Melbury Road built for artists such as G.F. Watts²⁰ and William Burges²¹ exemplified the continuing strength of the reaction against the predominance of Italianate stucco. William Makepeace Thackeray had purchased 2 Palace Green in 1860, three years before his death. This was an eighteenth-century brick-built dwelling which he

²⁰ F.P. Cockerell was the architect.

²¹ Burges designed the Tower House, 9 Melbury Road, for his own occupation.

acquired with the aim of undertaking substantial repairs. When it proved itself beyond salvaging he had a new home built on the site, specifying that it be built in red brick and in the Queen Anne style, declaring that he 'should die from a surfeit of stucco'.²²

Howard was informed of a plot of land on the west side of Palace Green, a wooded lane running between Kensington High Street and Kensington Gardens, as a possible site for the new house. During the 1860s and 1870s the social character of Palace Green and Kensington Palace Gardens was comprised largely of merchants, fundholders and those belonging to the railway, civil engineering and steel manufacturing professions:

...in general it was an aristocracy of wealth rather than of birth that was attracted to the road...²³

Howard's choice of site may have been influenced to some small extent by the prospect of locating himself in a neighbourhood whose inhabitants were professionals rather than people of landed position and wealth. Had he opted to wait a further handful of years before building his home, it is not improbable that Howard would have become one of the artists associated with Holland Park and Melbury Road. However, the Holland Park estate was not sold off until 1876.

Following his own initial viewing of the Palace Green site in February 1867, Howard accompanied Webb to evaluate it further. Following the visit, Webb wrote to him:

I think that by looking at the ground and the accommodation required that the thing comes out nearer to £7,000 than £6,000.²⁴

This enlarged estimate was approved, and the land was promptly purchased on an eighty year lease from the Crown for £1,600. Before doing so, however, Howard prudently ensured that the Commissioners of Woods and Forests²⁵ had no fundamental objections

²² Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne*. p.305

²³ *Survey of London*, XXXVII, p.161

²⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. April 23rd 1867. Following their initial consideration of purchasing a house at Queen's Gate Place, which was to cost £6,500, Howard had asked Webb to design a house for which he set an upper limit of £6,000.

²⁵ The Commissioners of Woods and Forests: the body responsible for ensuring that new building work in the vicinity was of an acceptable standard and not likely to detract from the appearance or value of other Crown properties in the Borough.

to the existing house being pulled down and replaced with a new brick-built dwelling. Even at this preliminary stage Webb had already decided upon the principle of using brick for the basis of his design, a decision likely to have been informed by his admiration for William Butterfield.²⁶ Butterfield's preference for using brick for commissions in the capital had been commented on as 'having its basis in the fact that London is naturally a brick town'.²⁷ This regard for building in a considered medium as a vehicle for the appropriate representation of a site's socio-historic identity was a principle upon which Webb placed equal emphasis. No objections were raised by the Commissioners to the principle of a brick-built house, and the purchase and consequent planning went ahead. A somewhat superfluous proviso was added to the lease that the old house was to be demolished and a new one costing not less than £3,500 built to replace it.

Initial building costs were listed by Webb as totalling £6,973 which, although within the revised limit now set at £7,000, nevertheless caused him some unease. He was apprehensive that such a total could not be regarded as inflexible and wrote to Howard on the matter:

The total you will see is within the boundary which at your request I feel myself bound to keep viz £7,000 but I cannot allow you to suppose that in a work of this size no unforeseen or accidental costs will have to be met - at least £300 might be allowed for this and £50 for a temporary clerk of works which brings the total to £7,206. At your desire and upon hearing from you I will go over the quantities and reduce where possible to the amount of £286.²⁸

It may be seen from this proposal that Webb's fierce guardianship of his integrity was counterbalanced by a scrupulous care of financial matters, in which respect for his client's expenditure was paramount. Beginning primarily as a contractual interdependence, the relationship between Webb and Howard soon relaxed into one of

²⁶ William Butterfield (1814-1900) There are several striking parallels between Webb and Butterfield: neither sought to promote their work by exhibiting designs; both despised and avoided competitions; both served to promulgate the advancement of modern architecture through experiment rather than by preserving a strict adherence to 'style'; and both retained an autocratic control over their designs and their implementation.

²⁷ *The Ecclesiologist*, quoted in Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, pp.69-70

²⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. September 7th 1867

friendship, and the ice of initial acquaintance thawed unusually quickly as far as the celebratedly cautious Webb was concerned. The house became the focus of much energetic discussion and lengthy correspondence between them, fostering a mutually supportive relationship during the protracted planning process that ensued.

The accommodation required for the Howards' residence²⁹ was extensive. In addition, it must be remembered that Webb's Socialist principles were a customary factor which gave rise to the incorporation of generous servants' quarters; indeed in some of his designs they appeared to rival the family accommodation in spaciousness:

Mrs Wyndham, the client of Clouds, remarked after the fire had destroyed the main block and she had to be temporarily rehoused during rebuilding that 'It is a good thing that our architect was a socialist because we find ourselves just as comfortable in the servants' quarters as we are in our own.'³⁰

There were lengthy meetings to discuss the Howards' needs. Webb was keen that all requests for particular requirements be made as early in the process as possible so that he could begin to establish what character of building would be appropriate, and in order to minimise subsequent adjustments.

A month after the purchase of the site, Webb wrote to Howard:

I will bear in mind the connection of nurseries and provide a space for a lift. You cannot think and tell me of too many things which you would like - for as I said before - they can be left out at any time much easier than they could be put in at any time.³¹

He responded to their requests with good humour coupled with a mock demonstration of that obsequiousness so often required by the employer of the employed. This served to reinforce Howard's awareness that this was no conventional relationship, and that he

²⁹ See Appendix 4

³⁰ Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, pp.45-6. The design and building of Clouds took several years during the mid-1880s; the site had been acquired in 1876 but it was not until 1881 that a final scheme was agreed upon. Clouds cost a phenomenal £80,000 to build. The house was destroyed by fire less than a year after its completion. The Wyndhams had the house restored and it was widely regarded as Webb's masterpiece, attracting visitors from far and wide. Webb wrote to Percy Wyndham on the matter: 'Let me hope the irrepressible sightseer from Yankee land and elsewhere is beginning to cease disturbing your peace with his curiosity as to the kind of house an English gentleman lives in.' Abdy & Gere, *The Souls*, p.88

³¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. April 23rd 1867

had in fact entered into a partnership rather than a contract of employment, a quirky relationship and one inseparable from their growing friendship. With a semi-basement kitchen and nurseries to be placed on the second floor, the provision of a lift was a matter of practicality, and one which Webb welcomed. He felt no conflict in reconciling this to the aesthetics of his design, it being a feature which would materially contribute to facilitating the functioning of the house as a home. Above all, this building was to be true to its function with the uncompromising honesty characteristic of Webb the rational thinker. The essence of his domestic designs is summed up Lethaby:

His houses embody houseness; they are homes...Webb's architecture was Humanity in Building...He felt that roofs, chimneys and walls were sacred.³²

This fundamentality of the marriage between aesthetic and function informed all Webb's designs: they proclaimed their worth through form and fitness without reliance on the transience of gimmick or vogue. Here his modernity was at its most challenging, his designs being interpretative rather than imitative:

If there was any thread of meaning in all the efforts of the 'Gothic Revival', Webb's experiments suggest that the modern architect must accept a rational theory of his art and develop its consequences in practice.³³

However, initial enthusiasm for the Palace Green project was to be dampened before long. Despite the fact that the Commissioners of Woods and Forests had been informed at the outset that the new house was to be built of brick, it was not long before they voiced their objections. Having submitted his design for approval, the trial of Webb's

³² Lethaby, *Phillip Webb*, p.130

³³ *Ibid.* p.85

patience began: the Third Commissioner,³⁴ the Crown architect Sir James Pennethorne,³⁵ objected, amongst other things, to the lack of stonework which Webb proposed for the building's exterior. He suggested that the house, which he thought was 'probably intended for dutch or german',³⁶ would look conspicuous in a neighbourhood which was otherwise visually harmonious, the majority of buildings in the immediate vicinity being Italianate in character and faced in Portland stone or stucco.³⁷ Webb's virtuosity in the use of brick was utterly lost on the Commissioners, who were bemused by the proposed appearance of a house which was to be virtually exclusively brick, with decorative features of rubbed brickwork. Webb wrote to Howard on the subject:

I am afraid that we are likely to suffer further delay on account of Mr Gore or Mr Pennithorne[sic]...(who)...object to the character of the elevations - now this I do not think we were led to expect, more epecially as I have taken particular pains to avoid anything like obtrusive or erratic design and I think you know enough of my work to be able to say that it is not likely to err on the side of ostentation.³⁸

Howard was to describe Sir Charles Gore as 'a man devoid of taste in art',³⁹ whilst Sir James Pennethorne has been dubbed 'an old-fashioned Classicist'.⁴⁰ By 1868

³⁴ The Office of Woods and Forests was headed by three commissioners. The First, or Chief, Commissioner was a politician whose responsibility was general policy and its presentation to Parliament. The Second was concerned with public buildings and metropolitan improvements. The Third was responsible for managing the Crown Estates. Gore (First Commissioner), despite his criticisms of Webb's original plans, was more flexible in his outlook than Pennethorne (Third Commissioner) and the dispute would perhaps have been less protracted, and certainly less rancorous, had approval for the design lain solely in his hands.

³⁵ James Pennethorne (1802-1871) had acted for the Office of Works since 1851, beginning with a commission for the new Stationery Office near Westminster Abbey, but his position remained ambiguous until 1859, when he became a salaried architect and surveyor there.

³⁶ Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne*, p.305

³⁷ There may have been an element of dissimulation in Pennethorne's attitude, as Thackeray's house, 2 Palace Green was a brick dwelling, the plans for which had received no objections from the Commissioners.

³⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. September 7th 1867

³⁹ Airlie papers, quoted in Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle*, p.89

⁴⁰ Stamp & Avery, *Victorian Buildings of London 1837-1887*, p.98

Pennethorne was nearing the end of a lengthy career, having designed public buildings for the capital since the 1840s, which were overwhelmingly neo-classical in character. His negativity concerning Webb's plan is therefore unsurprising; although essentially gothic in character, the design refused to be exclusively so, and thus caused Pennethorne offence on two counts. He requested Webb to explain the merits of the design. Webb refused to do so and instead wrote in inflammatory terms of his disgust that Howard had been permitted to purchase the plot of land in the first place:

...without so much as a hint that the disgracefully heterogeneous forms and colours of the greater number of houses in Palace Green, would have to be followed in one form or another, in new and more carefully considered work.⁴¹

and without the added indignity that:

...the various crude ideas of the uninformed inhabitants of the district would have to be considered by an architect who was desirous of attending to the really artistic character of the neighbourhood.⁴²

Webb was resigned to the fact that it was becoming increasingly improbable that building would commence before the following year, but as yet remained undismayed by the possibility of a more serious outcome, entering the fray with apparent relish:

...I would advise you not to consider the matter of the Palace Gardens a hopeless affair...it would not have been quite reasonable in me to have settled upon a design for a client if I did not think it at the time worth fighting for.⁴³

He suggested to Howard that in the interim period they would be able to put the winter months to good use, in order to establish between them which elements of the design they were prepared to modify, and which they would insist on standing by. With a little patient pertinacity they could hope to succeed in making their opponents 'as tired of us, as we are of them.'⁴⁴ He was already in the throes of redesigning the studio window, which was one of the elements that had been 'emphatically condemned'⁴⁵ by both

⁴¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. October 18th 1867

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. October 22nd 1867

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Pennethorne and Gore, and was willing to make any reasonable alterations to the design which did not injure the fundamental principles upon which it was based. This was in itself a concession of no small significance for Webb.

However, relations between the protagonists deteriorated over the winter of 1867/8, and instead of a compromise being reached in time to commence building in the spring, a burgeoning obduracy and frankness of expression between the parties was the result. Pennethorne in particular, having by now discarded any facade of civility, openly acknowledged that he regarded Webb's design as 'perfectly hideous'.⁴⁶ The Commissioners proposed arbitration by a neutral party. Howard was informed that both the design, and their objections to it, were to be inspected by Anthony Salvin (1799-1881),⁴⁷ an architect who stood 'so high in professional reputation'⁴⁸ that they would feel justified in abiding by his decision. Such an indignity was guaranteed to enrage Webb, whose low-key reputation was by no means a reflection of his abilities. It was, rather, the self-imposition of relative anonymity within the architectural fraternity, in preference to the concessions and compromise which were the inevitable consequence of seeking an exalted professional status. By now, Howard was losing heart but was rallied by Webb, who was determined not to give up without a fight, particularly when their opponents were so utterly hemmed in by a subservience to convention, which he regarded with unconcealed derision.

Salvin anticipated a straightforward exchange of views so that 'Mr Webb may have no difficulty in making such alterations as will gain Mr Gore's consent'⁴⁹ but, unwilling to be the sole arbiter amidst such hot dispute, he requested that Thomas Wyatt (1807-1880, PRBA 1870) provide a second opinion. The meeting was arranged for January 3rd 1868, prolonging Howard's financial discomfort. Salvin and Wyatt's resulting report

⁴⁶ Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne*, p.305

⁴⁷ Salvin had previously been employed by the Howard family for extensive rebuilding work at Naworth following the fire there in 1844.

⁴⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/65. Charles Gore to Howard, October 24th 1867

⁴⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/65. December 26th 1867

was consistently negative in its appraisal of the design; amongst their principal objections was the fact that they were unable to ascertain 'what style or period of architecture Mr Webb has sought to adopt'.⁵⁰ Webb expressed his surprise at their desire to hinder the erection of a building which:

...possesses some character and originality, tempered most certainly with reverential attention to the works of acknowledged masters of the art of architecture and...formed with a wish to avoid adding another insult to this irreparably injured neighbourhood. ⁵¹

He was now faced with a fresh list of suggested modifications compiled by Gore and Pennethorne, in accordance with Salvin and Wyatt's recommendations, which, if they were acceded to, would obtain approval of his design. In short, the greater the proportion of stonework Webb was willing to incorporate into what had started life as an entirely brick-built building, the more likely he was to have it accepted. Some of these modifications Webb grudgingly accommodated: a stonework plinth, a broad band of stone at first floor level with a moulded stringcourse, the substitution of stone for brick and tile sills to most of the windows, and the finishing of the chimney caps in stone. In addition, Pennethorne *et al* laid particular emphasis on their objections to the main cornice, one of the 'fundamental principles' of the design which Webb had already unequivocally stated his unwillingness to injure by alteration. Pennethorne agreed to approve the revised plans, provided that a stone cornice with a projection of at least eighteen inches was substituted for the brick one. Webb's witheringly caustic response to Pennethorne deserves quoting at length, as it highlights the singlemindedness with which he would persevere to preserve the integrity of a design. The financial implications of losing the commission were as nothing to him when compared to the near-sacrilege of having his design pinned down and dissected by rival practitioners so totally out of tune with his ethos:

With regard to the 1st requirement of Mr Gore's letter...Mr Webb will not object to modify the arches of windows as...required - that is - to double the thickness of those arches which in the last submitted elevations only show to be of one course. Mr Webb is much surprised at the second requirement, which is, that "the main cornice which runs above the heads of the chamber windows is

⁵⁰ *Survey of London*, XXXVII, p.185. Source uncited

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.187, footnote 180. Crown Estates Office file 10525.

of stone at least 18 inches thick". Mr Webb cannot conceive it possible that the elevation should have been carefully examined, or such an incongruous detail would not have been specified. The chief feature in the design is the gauged brick band or string course in combination with the pilasters of parapet and Mr Webb has been most careful in the altered elevations not to impair or destroy this most necessary feature, or damage the surface of colour which the material would give; and he is satisfied that no person desirous of injuring the design and bringing ridicule upon the architect, could have hit upon a more successful idea than that of substituting the stone cornice specified. Mr Webb therefore declines to accede to the above requirement on the grounds that no architect who is worthy of the name, will allow his work to be mutilated by irresponsible hands, and he is decidedly of the opinion that the arbitrary rule of another professional man in such a matter of detail - even if he should happen to be a man of genius - would not improve the work of any architect who had taken pains to make his design a consistent whole. ⁵²

Evidently feeling that the overwhelming odds of the establishment were immovably stacked against him, he concluded this missive with an offer to withdraw from the 'unequal contest' but added that:

...great delay and loss of money as a consequence would scarcely be repaid by the pleasure another architect would have in seeing his own handiwork in the design. ⁵³

Webb's sense of outrage spurred him on to deliver the above response, directed through Pennethorne at Salvin and Wyatt, whose criticisms had prompted the Commissioners' recommendations. His ill-concealed derision fanned the flames of the dispute and elevated it to new heights of acrimony. Webb's scorn for Pennethorne in particular affected him so perniciously that he was to refer to it again ten years later when his design for St Martin's church in Brampton faced censure;⁵⁴ Pennethorne evolved in his mind to embody the quintessence of bloody-minded reactionariness. Howard sought to add weight to Webb's above response by writing to the Commissioners in support of

⁵² Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. March 3rd 1868

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ The Bishop of Carlisle, Harvey Goodwin, had suggested that, amongst other modifications, additional dormer windows in the pitched roof of the south aisle would be advantageous. On that occasion, Webb wrote to Howard thus: 'Here we are, in for it again - It puts me in mind of the late lamented Mr Pennithorne [sic]...I am indeed sorry that through my want of name - architecturally speaking - you should be subject to so much trouble in this matter. What his lord bishopship of Carlisle may be in theology, I can't say, but for his knowledge of architecture my opinion is that he is little better than -a -a bishop.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. September 14th 1875.

him, and by providing an explanation of exactly why the recommended stone cornice was so fundamentally unacceptable to Webb, a matter which in his anger he had not addressed:

The construction and proportion of the building, notwithstanding the occurrence of some classical forms in the windows etc. is in its motive gothic. The introduction of a classical cornice would therefore be obviously incongruous...the introduction of the stone cornice into the present design is impossible. ⁵⁵

Howard now found himself in the truly impossible position of owning a plot of land upon which his proposed residence would apparently never be built, paying £30 per annum for the privilege, and unable to sell it back to the land agents who, after having previously had it on their hands for several years, flatly refused to consider its repurchase. Webb, acutely aware of this predicament, now advised Howard to employ the builder-architect William Butterfield to submit new designs for a house on the site. Butterfield was approached, and his ensuing response to the request was relayed to the Commissioners by Howard in a letter, the frankness of which betrays the pitch of frustration which he too had now reached:

...Mr Butterfield will not undertake to design any plans for my house...he refuses for two reasons - 1st because he considers that Mr Webb who is no personal friend of his has had a great injustice done to him and is therefore unwilling to take his place. Secondly because he is unwilling to place his work under the control of Mr Pennithorne's [sic] taste after seeing the way in which it has been exercised. ⁵⁶

Matters stood at an impasse until the intervention of Howard's father. He was incensed by the injustice of the situation, the resolution of which would be both financially expedient and desirable from a practical standpoint, as Rosalind was by now expecting a third child. A primary factor behind the purchase of the Palace Green plot had been the fact that it had appeared possible to erect a house of a new and original design thereupon without objections being raised by the authorities. In protest at the demurring which had succeeded the submission of Webb's plans, he remonstrated with the Commissioners:

If indeed we had bought a house on Lord Westminster's property, we should have known what to expect. Then we could not have indulged in any fancy of

⁵⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/65. Undated

⁵⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/65. March 23rd 1868

our own...I think that you might be content with the concessions that have been made to you and that you will not think it necessary to insist upon this wretched cornice.⁵⁷

Charles Howard's intercession appears to have facilitated the Commissioners' grudging approval of the design: Gore responded with a conciliatory gesture, and a meeting between Webb and Wyatt was convened, during which Webb's revised design for the brick cornice was unveiled and approved. Rosalind Howard recorded the outcome in her journal:

...all is ended joyfully about the house - C. Gore gives in & Wyatt was very civil to Webb.⁵⁸

The process had taken eighteen months and had tried, tested and exasperated beyond measure all concerned. Despite the prolonged wranglings, however, Howard had not once questioned Webb's dogged stance, nor had he ever hinted that compromise was the more expedient option. As a result, the sacrifice of aesthetic distinction upon the altar of financial alleviation had been avoided to a great extent.⁵⁹ Webb and Howard had become closely-bound in an alliance against an opposition comprised of those considered, by both, to be compromised by their enslavement to commerce and a signal lack of imagination. By acting as he did, Howard earned Webb's lasting friendship and respect. Throughout the 1870s the relationship flourished, Howard and Webb maintaining close contact and working together on the committee of SPAB. If Webb had ever doubted Howard's sincerity or intentions, he soon realised that the mild-mannered Howard was as tenacious as himself in seeking to determine the direction his future was to take, despite the counter-weight of familial expectation.

Years later, when in 1922 1 Palace Green was threatened with demolition after standing empty for several years, a letter of protest to *The Times* had, as Lethaby recalled:

...arrested immediate destruction. It pointed out that this building was 'practically the first essay in the modern type of thoughtful and individual

⁵⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Charles Howard to Charles Gore, March 24th 1867

⁵⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14. March 31st 1868

⁵⁹ Stamp suggests that 35 Glebe Place, Chelsea which was designed and built by Webb for George Price Boyce in 1868-9 may indicate how Webb's original design for Palace Green might have appeared.

townhouse.’⁶⁰

The Secretary to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests recalled the controversy prompted by its design:

Before it was erected there was a tremendous controversy over the plans of the house. The architect of the Office of Woods and Forests said he did not think they would work out well for a private residence. Two other architects were brought in and these consultants backed up the Crown architect. Finally, as the Commissioner of Woods thought that as the internal arrangements of the house were rather the concern of the man who was to live in it, he consented to its being built subject to certain modifications of the exterior.⁶¹

He made it quite plain, though, that the conviction and approval of the few did not necessarily render it a successful building in the eyes of the majority, and revealed more than a hint of bias in his assessment of Palace Green’s attributes:

The question whether it is a successful effort of British domestic architecture must depend upon whether you can get anyone to take it as a private residence and pay a fair rent for it. Perhaps the average Philistine would regard the house as being more than a little gloomy...⁶²

There echoes through his words that sweetness of exultation so often felt by the vindicated. Webb’s criticisms of the Secretary’s brother-Commissioners appear still to have nettled him over half a century later.

Palace Green, however, was to prove resoundingly the truth of Webb’s epithet ‘To influence the stream one must be on the bank. You can’t shape a course and yet be in the current.’⁶³ Despite the unpleasantness to which it had given rise, this proved to be one of his most influential designs. Lethaby recalled a chance meeting with one of his contemporaries:

I asked a man...a critical connoisseur but no architect, what he thought of Lord Carlisle’s house: ‘It is wonderful in our eyes and to be held in great honour.’

⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.89

⁶¹ Ibid. p.90. Lethaby quotes his statement in *The Times* of 2nd December.

⁶² Ibid. p.89

⁶³ Ibid. p.247

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.88

In 1898, thirty years after its erection, 1 Palace Green remained a source of optimism for architectural critics:

Of all Mr Webb's town work this more than any other is presageful of the architecture that may become a part of the coming time...⁶⁵

The building process

At the beginning of June 1868 building work belatedly commenced, the first stage of which was the demolition of the existing building on the site. Webb felt a palpable sense of compassion for the older house despite its lack of architectural distinction. In his eyes, making way for the new involved an infinitely more complex process than simply obliterating the old. In this case the old house contributed, however humbly, to its successor, thus achieving the benign evolution of the site upon which it had stood. Webb wrote to Howard on the subject:

The poor old house was very rotten - but I have saved such things as it would be possible for us to re-use as memorials.⁶⁶

Re-cycling was a practice employed by Webb whenever the opportunity presented itself.⁶⁷ It ensured some nature of continuity on a site, and it was with a gentleness approaching reverence that he preserved for the future that which was salvageable from the past. With Clouds, for example (1881-6), both the spirit and actuality of the farmhouse that had formerly occupied the site were honoured: the ancient Clowdes was retained in a modified form as a name for the new building, and its front door was re-used in a rear entrance to the house. Webb's distress at the general disregard for the spirit of architecture obliterated in the name of progress was referred to many years later by him as 'a well of sadness'.⁶⁸

Throughout the preceding eighteen months, Howard had continued to proffer

⁶⁵ Morris (*Archit. Rev.*, II (1897), p. 204).

⁶⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. July 16th 1868

⁶⁷ He followed the same practice at St Martin's in Brampton.

⁶⁸ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.11

suggestions regarding required facilities in the house. Their dealings with the despised Commissioners had united them, and Webb's correspondence had by the end of 1868 imperceptibly slipped into an easy familiarity, the tone of which was epitomised by a seeming deference undercut by whimsical satire:

My tightest shoes would scarcely have kept me from shaking in them, if I had found no West window in the spare bedroom next to Mr George Howard's dressing room -but there is one and I have much pleasure in thinking that the house will be so much better in your imagination. ⁶⁹

Within the circle of friends Howard, together with Morris, was often the butt of both Webb and Burne-Jones's humour. On one occasion, Webb's response to a 'grumbling letter' from Howard was:

Is there any danger of your papering a small room with one of Morris's worst papers and getting into the room and locking the door and dying at once of the arsenic? ⁷⁰

Palace Green as it was finally built had four floors, excluding the basement area, and was based on a compact L-shaped plan with a low stable block occupying the open angle (fig. 104). Much of the consternation caused by its design had arisen from the apparently eclectic references made to styles which were, and to conventional minds, should remain, mutually exclusive. In this case, the building incorporated elements of the gothic (such as the window arches of the dining room with 'something like the springing of a ribbed vault'⁷¹), the Queen Anne (in the curved aprons beneath the window sills)⁷² and the eighteenth century (in the sash windows) (fig. 105). These references were not made in a spirit of indecision, however, as Wyatt and Salvin had presumed. Webb was confident that such elements could be successfully and appropriately blended, if the natural growth of the design suggested it as a rational response to its geographical or historical context. Webb applied the precepts of Pugin in an instinctive response to the dictates of site and purpose. This was his interpretation of

⁶⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. December 10th 1868

⁷⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Undated

⁷¹ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.87

⁷² A feature prefigured by Prinsep's house.

the spirit of gothic, whence a building 'grew' without the distortion of constricting precepts.

The use of Portland stone to the exterior of Palace Green was as minimal as would be tolerated by the authorities: the base of the house was skirted by a tall stone plinth and a stone band served to link the first and second storeys and other external features such as the porch and aperture for the recess window on the west wall of the house. The window sills were of stone, too, a recommendation about which Wyatt and Salvin had refused to make any concessions; the chimneys were capped with stone, and the vertical wall of the central gable was faced in substantial stone blocks. The majority of these features arose only in Webb's final design. The repetition of related motifs served as harmonizing elements with the porch, two minor gables, decorative brickwork and chimney stacks all echoing the bold front gable window. It was just such features as the decorative brickwork panel on the exterior dining room wall,⁷³ brickwork pilasters and cornicing which were to provide:

...precedents for fashionable house builders for a whole generation...this house furnished a pattern-book of 'features' for architects who designed by compilation from cribs. ⁷⁴

At 1 Palace Green, as at Prinsep's house, the studio window was placed prominently at the front of the building, acting as a bold feature and proclaiming it to be the abode of an artist:

A properly appointed workplace, whether added to the dwelling...or combined within a purpose-built residence, removed the suspicion of amateurism from the person based erstwhile in makeshift domestic surroundings. ⁷⁵

The interior

Immediately prior to Palace Green's completion, Webb replied to Howard's New Year

⁷³ This was in the form of a sunflower, an emblem which would come to exemplify the quintessence of Aestheticism during the 1870s and 1880s.

⁷⁴ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.88

⁷⁵ Walkley, *Artists' Houses in London*, p.xxiv

wishes for 1869 with a characteristically paradoxical note absolving himself from any risk of criticism by subverting Howard's expectations before the house was even completed:

Thank you very much for your New Years wish...For a return, I wish you a better house than you will get and the same full of friends that you may forget your disappointment. ⁷⁶

This was the design he had fought long and hard to preserve and in which he had, in truth, unshakable confidence. His mocking self-accusatory stance was one of a repertoire of mechanisms by which Webb sought to subvert negative responses. In return for the faith placed in him by those for whom he undertook to build, the fulfillment of their implicit expectations mattered immensely to him; he remained unable to deal philosophically with the disappointment of a client. There are instances when his intuition was such that it detected the smallest hesitation in a client's reaction to his scheme. For instance, Webb wrote to Rosalind Howard following one of their meetings to discuss plans for the drawing room at Palace Green:

It seemed to me on Monday that you would have preferred to have a simple cornice to the Drawing Room instead of the frieze as designed. If this is true, please let me know as I can alter it without the slightest difficulty. ⁷⁷

It appears that she deferred to Webb, the result being a deep plasterwork frieze worked in a raised design reminiscent of the wallpaper Willow.⁷⁸ The design was a modest one, and perfectly complemented a room that was redolent of the 'Hellenic refinement of detail, imaginative and elusive qualities'⁷⁹ so characteristic of Webb's buildings. The sheer extent of the care and attention to detail lavished on the house is well illustrated by the following letter of Webb's, again referring to the drawing room frieze, which serves to demonstrate that there were truly no minutiae beneath his notice. Howard had enquired as to the most sympathetic manner of hanging pictures in the room, bearing in

⁷⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. January 2nd 1869

⁷⁷ Ibid. J22/64. May 19th 1869

⁷⁸ Willow was designed by Morris in 1874 and adapted in 1877 for a woven silk.

⁷⁹ Morris (*Archit. Rev.*, II (June-Nov 1897), pp.199-208)

mind the clarity of its lines, and Webb responded thus:

With regard to the hanging of pictures in the Drawing room - I should prefer for **appearance** that they should be hung from simple nails driven in just underneath the frieze - and any very large picture with fine cord from the top if [there is] room **over** the frieze - it is probable that there would not be many large enough to require this height as the bottom of the frieze is 8 feet from the floor - but at all events you need not hesitate to hang pictures over this line and without rods. ⁸⁰

The fact that Howard consulted him at all on so small a matter reinforces the sense that he perceived himself as a collaborator in fulfilling the aesthetic potential of the house. His position was certainly not merely that of client.

The dining room and the Cupid and Psyche frieze

In contrast to the drawing room, the dining room at Palace Green was to play host to the house's crowning glory - the dramatic Cupid and Psyche frieze, designed by Burne-Jones.

It seems that a frieze may have been envisaged as an integral part of the design for the dining room from the outset of the planning process; there is mention of one in a letter from Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company as early as 18th June 1867, almost three months before Webb had produced his final estimate of the building costs. Correspondence from Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co concerns the cost of the proposed commission, and is characteristically unbusinesslike and indecisive:

...we find it difficult to settle roughly any amount for the execution. If the surface were well covered up with figures we might say so much per figure but if there were only [a] few figures we should be obliged to calculate so much per yard...Our Mr Morris did say £50 per figure as a rough estimate. This might be a fair general guess for a surface covered with many figures but of course if it were only four or five you would have to consider the intermediate spaces of garden as over and above the figure work. ⁸¹

⁸⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. June 3rd 1869. Webb's preferred method of picture-hanging may be observed from Rickard's illustration of the draawing room (fig. 106) in *The Architectural Review*, II (June-Nov 1897), p.203.

⁸¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. It is logical to assume that this letter refers to the proposed mural decorations, as cartoons for figures in stained glass panels did have a set price; also, were the letter referring to an easel painting, any discussions as to price would have been directly between Burne-Jones and Howard. It appears that mural decoration, representing as it did a less common aspect of the Firm's work, was thus dealt with in a less standardised manner.

Warrington Taylor had been engaged as business manager to the Firm in 1865, and fought an uphill battle in attempting to place its business practices and financial management on a more formal and reliable footing. Morris was later to recall that at the outset of the Firm as a business venture, the partners had only a hazy idea of how to charge for their work based on the 'general idea' that 5 % was the usual reasonable profit.⁸² Taylor relied upon Webb to galvanise the other partners into achieving some semblance of financial awareness:

There must be more decision or within 6 months you are in a muck...it is your business to call a meeting and settle at once what you are going to do - and just you see that you don't talk rot but decide definitely because generally the time would be better employed in a comic song...Morris confesses he is a Celt, and we know what that means in the practical line...You may be quite certain that you will charge £9 for that which costs you £10. ⁸³

Shortly following this, and due to Taylor's increasing delicacy of health, it was proposed that Webb receive £80 per annum as consulting manager,⁸⁴ an offer which he initially refused. However, with the company's finances in an increasingly precarious state, Taylor urged him to reconsider:

We could not move another step without your professional assistance, and therefore if you will not be paid the firm must come to a stop - because sponging on you is degrading. ⁸⁵

In 1868 the Firm produced a net profit of only £300. By 1870 Morris' personal finances remained so disorganised that Taylor drew up a household budget for him.⁸⁶ Only Morris's strict adherence to this could ensure a future for the company. Taylor's exhortations continued until his death from consumption later that year. His funeral and other final expenses were met by the Firm, and by Webb, who in a last act of

⁸² Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.60. This was in 1867.

⁸³ *Ibid.* p.54

⁸⁴ Meeting held on May 16th 1867. Hammersmith and Fulham Archive, DD/235/1. Copy of the minute book of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. for 1862-1874.

⁸⁵ Lethaby, *Philip Webb*, p.55

⁸⁶ Hammersmith and Fulham Archive, DD/235/1. The company's minute book records that it was agreed at a meeting held on March 19th 1870 that 'the salary of Mr Morris should be increased to £50 per annum and that his rent, taxes, gas and coals should also be paid for by the Firm...'

camaraderie also designed his tombstone. Until a replacement business manager was found, in the person of George Wardle, the pressures of improving efficiency devolved upon Webb. This was the backdrop of financial and organisational chaos against which the furnishing and decoration of Palace Green was placed.

In the Spring of 1868 the Howards visited Antwerp, where they met Henri Leys and were taken to view the frescoes in his dining room. As Leys was engaged on the the frescoes for the hall of Antwerp's Hotel de Ville, it is likely that Howard would also have seen this work-in-progress. There ensued a particular interest in mural decoration during their stay in Antwerp, which may indicate Howard's preoccupation with the proposed scheme for Palace Green. In September the following year Webb informed Howard that:

I have arranged for the dining room panelling and find that it will give a very good space of the upper part as background for pictures.⁸⁷

The source for the Cupid and Psyche frieze was the work originally conceived in 1865 as a joint venture between Morris and Burne-Jones: *The Big Story Book*. This was planned as a single volume of verse stories written by Morris, to be lavishly illustrated by Burne-Jones.⁸⁸ Georgiana Burne-Jones later recalled that during their farewell visit to Red House, prior to the Morris' move to Queen Square, much of the conversation between the two men concerned this grandiose scheme;⁸⁹ subsequently, weekly meetings were held to discuss the project. It has been suggested that Morris may have hoped that Webb would design those illustrations involving architecture, such as *The Palace East of the Sun and West of the Moon*.⁹⁰

Of the many tales of mythology and folklore to be included in *The Big Story Book*, that of Cupid and Psyche was perhaps the first to be written.⁹¹ For this, Burne-Jones designed approximately seventy illustrations during the summer of 1865, over fifty of

⁸⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. September 6th 1869

⁸⁸ Their original plans were for over five hundred illustrations.

⁸⁹ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, I, p.294

⁹⁰ Dunlap, *The Book that never Was*, p.11

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p.11

which were hand-cut by Morris (figs 107 & 108). They were heavily influenced by Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Polophili*, first published by Aldus Manutius of Venice in 1499. Both Burne-Jones and Morris possessed early editions of the book. Rosalind Howard recorded a visit to Burne-Jones' studio in July of the following year during which she was shown 'all his designs for Psyche's story'.⁹²

When a sufficient number of blocks had been cut, the Chiswick Press printed two specimens, each with a different typeface, of the double column folio pages, with the designs arranged as a frieze across the top. It was apparent that the quality of the reproduction of both type and illustrations did not warrant further expenditure on the project at that stage, and it was abandoned. Instead, *The Big Story Book* metamorphosed into *The Earthly Paradise*, which was published by F.S. Ellis in three volumes between 1868 and 1870, each with a single woodcut of a Burne-Jones design⁹³ on the title page. Plans for the illustrated version were abandoned, to be resurrected once again in the 1890s at the Kelmscott Press.⁹⁴

The Earthly Paradise embodied much that was dear to both Morris and Burne-Jones; the latter returned to it time after time as a source for his paintings. There are indications that Howard's own interest in the project had also been more than a passing one: he retained, until his death, eight proofs of the designs for the tale of Cupid and Psyche. He also copied illustrations from Burne-Jones' *Hypnerotomachia Pophili* and, as has already been noted, joined the illustrative resurgence of the 1860s by working as an illustrator for the *People's Magazine*. It is possible, then, that Howard may himself have suggested the adaptation of Burne-Jones' woodcuts for the mural decoration at Palace Green.

In 1870, when work on the frieze began, Burne-Jones was passing through both

⁹² Castle Howard Archive, J23/104. July 26th 1866. It is probable that Howard had already seen them and had requested a viewing for Rosalind.

⁹³ Three female minstrels standing beside a low wall overhung by dense foliage.

⁹⁴ Ironically, *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*, the publication of which was finally anticipated immediately prior to Morris's death, was never printed there. In 1897 Longmans undertook, with the agreement of Morris's trustees, to publish a limited edition of 500 copies of *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*, which was to include the illustrations by Burne-Jones. Once again, however, plans remained unrealised due to Burne-Jones's death the following year.

emotional and artistic crises. The turmoil of his relationship with Maria Zambaco persisted, his relations with Ruskin were strained, and he felt a loss of artistic direction compounded by his desire to return to Italy. Burne-Jones' perturbation and sense of isolation had reached its height in 1869, when his affair with Maria reached its undignified climax. The latter months of 1870 brought with them a resolution to rebuild his personal affairs, but it was a slow process which would take several years. Although Ruskin had provided staunch emotional support for Burne-Jones during the difficult period that followed Maria's failed suicide, when he withdrew into semi-isolation at The Grange, an underlying rift had developed between them in their opinions on art and imagination. The relationship had faltered as Burne-Jones' admiration for Michelangelo, and other masters of the High Renaissance, intensified. Ruskin could not approve. He read his 1871 Slade Lecture on Tintoretto and Michelangelo to Burne-Jones prior to its delivery; it contained a vitriolic attack on the artists of the High Renaissance, whom Ruskin regarded as having debased the purity and piety of the *quattrocento* artists:

Raphael, Michaelangelo, and Titian, together bring about the deadly change, playing into each other's hands - Michaelangelo being the chief captain in evil, Titian in natural force.⁹⁵

The two now met less often, and Burne-Jones recognised with dejection that:

...he quarrels with my pictures and I with his writing, and there is no peace between us - and you know all is up when friends do not admire each other's work.⁹⁶

This was a time of discontent and lack of focus; he wrote to Howard:

I have 60 pictures, oil and water, in my studio & every day I would gladly begin a new one.⁹⁷

An undisguised classicism was becoming manifest in his work, indebted to Michelangelo and the lyrical *sfumato* of Leonardo da Vinci. The Cupid and Psyche frieze embodied a twofold transition from its source: firstly, from book illustration to

⁹⁵ Ruskin, quoted in Harrison & Waters, *Burne-Jones*, p.104

⁹⁶ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p.18

⁹⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27

mural decoration; secondly, from *quattrocento* and Flemish influences to those of the Renaissance.

Burne-Jones' decision to continue with the commission invites conjecture. His previous forays into mural decoration had been less than resoundingly successful. The Oxford Union murals executed in 1857 had deteriorated extensively within a short space of time, and the mural decoration planned for Red House was never completed. The Green Dining Room at the Victoria and Albert Museum, for which Burne-Jones designed a series of panels depicting the months of the year, had also proved unsatisfactory.⁹⁸ As a result of the latter instance, Warrington Taylor had deleted mural decoration from the Firm's prospectus, in which it had originally headed the list. The commission for the frieze at Palace Green was therefore placed with Burne-Jones personally rather than being dealt with by the Firm. However, it would seem from the previously-cited correspondence that he was assisted, somewhat vaguely, with setting the price that Howard was to be charged.⁹⁹ The commission must have come as a financial boon for Burne-Jones at a time when, despite his increasing stature as an artist, he was concerned about the additional expenditure entailed by living at The Grange. The controversy which had prompted his resignation from the Old Watercolour Society in 1871 had undermined his confidence, and he was not to exhibit in public again (with the exception of two works at the Dudley Gallery in 1873) until the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. However, Burne-Jones had expended a great deal of time on the designs for the tale of Cupid and Psyche, and an opportunity now presented itself for he and Morris to work together on the project in a different form. It must also be remembered that during the late 1860s Burne-Jones had turned to Howard for companionship and understanding, and a mutually supportive relationship had resulted. It is not inconceivable that Burne-Jones felt morally bound to both George and Rosalind Howard for the staunch and continuing support they showed to both himself and Georgiana

⁹⁸ Harrison & Waters, *Burne-Jones*, p.90: 'The panels executed by the firm's workmen proved so poor that [Burne-]Jones instructed Murray to repaint all except one.'

⁹⁹ For a more detailed analysis of Burne-Jones' work in mural decoration, see: Waters, *Painter and Patron* (*Apollo*, CII, no. 165 (1975), pp.338-43)

following the revelation of his relationship with Maria Zambaco; perhaps gratitude played its part in urging him to persevere with the frieze. It is also undoubtedly true that he undertook commissions for Howard on a more informal basis than for others.

The dining room scheme was for twelve large panels which were to occupy the space between dado and ceiling (fig. 109), and a smaller one, *Psyche received by the Gods and Goddesses*, which was to fill an arched recess at one end of the room. The differing dimensions of the panels were dictated by the large decorative spandrels supporting the ceiling, between which they were to be placed. The panels were to be painted on canvas in the studio and subsequently erected *in situ* once nearing completion.¹⁰⁰ They were painted in oils, thinned with spirit, to achieve a flattened effect, and were in treatment 'somewhat after the manner of Pinturricchio',¹⁰¹ for whom Howard harboured a particular admiration.

Several elements of the scheme were designs translated directly from woodblock to cartoon, being altered only in scale and not in form. Others were adapted in order to render them more effective for the space within which they were to be placed, two or more woodblock designs being condensed to fill a single panel (fig. 110).¹⁰² Burne-Jones was optimistic that a large proportion of the work could be accomplished whilst Howard wintered in Italy. He informed him that:

...I have begun the procession picture and so far it looks pretty, I have drawn every bit of it myself - and see that I shall have to do so through the work, but if it comes out well I shall not regret it - all the less that you are to have it.¹⁰³

This letter refers to the second panel, *The King and other mourners, preceded by trumpeters, accompanying Psyche to the mountain, where she is to be abandoned to the monster, according to Apollo's oracle*, upon which he expended the greatest amount

¹⁰⁰ Rhead, *Principles of Design*, p.54: 'In the decorations at the Earl of Carlisle's house...the frieze is painted on canvas and applied or cemented to the walls by means of a mixture of white lead and oil, which is laid plentifully on the back of the canvas, and the painting pressed down with a cloth.'

¹⁰¹ Crane, *Reminiscences*, p.167

¹⁰² Rosalind Howard's account book for 1872 records: 'Canvases for pictures in dining room at P[alace] Green and designs by B-Jones £21-0-0' Castle Howard Archive, J23/105

¹⁰³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

of time.¹⁰⁴ Progress following this initial enthusiasm was sporadic, and Burne-Jones's subsequent correspondence with Howard is punctuated with apologies for the dilatoriness with which the panels advanced. The prolonged delays were at least partially due to Burne-Jones's studio assistant, Charles Fairfax Murray, whom he had intended to undertake a significant proportion of the work on the panels:

I spoke to little Murray and strange to say that great soul unbent and was affable and we are to organise the wall pictures at once.¹⁰⁵

However, this was soon to be followed by the news that:

...he said pretty plainly that he repented the undertaking...as I think he wants to get away to Italy...I feel seriously angry about it..¹⁰⁶

Burne-Jones suggested that, in Murray's absence, he start another pupil to work at the frieze panels 'since you will not try it yourself',¹⁰⁷ forewarning him that progress would be slower than if Murray had agreed to continue with them.

Charles Roberts, Howard's son-in-law, was later to recall an incident which highlights Howard's seemingly inexhaustible forbearance in relation to the frieze's tardy progress: after several years, ever-hopeful that it would be completed, he seated Burne-Jones opposite the remaining vacant and unpainted spaces during a dinner party, in hopes of his being prompted into action by the unsightliness of the blank areas still remaining.

There is about the frieze panels a lack of conviction, which ultimately got the better of their designer. Howard, finally admitting to himself that if they were ever to be finished it was unlikely to be by Burne-Jones, offered the commission for their completion to

¹⁰⁴ Burne-Jones was to retain and rework it in 1895 as an easel painting, *The Wedding of Psyche*. The musicians at the head of the procession were treated separately as *The Challenge in the Wilderness*, which remained unfinished at the time of his death.

¹⁰⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated, July 1871. Murray's closest friend, W.S. Spanton, author of *An Art Student and his Teachers in the Sixties*, recalled that Howard 'would call on horseback to see Murray' (p.73). David Elliott evaluates their relationship thus: 'George Howard was another of Fairfax Murray's gifted friendships across the divides of age and social standing which would remain important to him in years to come.' Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray*, p.26

¹⁰⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated, October 1871

¹⁰⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

Walter Crane. To avoid the chaos of moving house Crane, with his wife and newborn child, was staying with the Howards during the winter of 1875/6. He was working on another mural commission at the time, for a Mrs Eustace Smith.¹⁰⁸ He had also assisted with the decoration of 11 Palace Gardens for architect E.J. Tarver two years previously, which had included the design and execution of a frieze of panels depicting animals and birds for the dining room.¹⁰⁹

Crane was faced with thirteen panels at widely differing stages of progress: some remained blank but for the cartoon outline, and the rest varied from being partially to considerably advanced. They were sent to his studio at Beaumont Lodge where he worked on them for a considerable period, using copies of the original woodcuts and Burne-Jones's 1872 watercolour sketches for reference. As already stated, Burne-Jones repossessed *The Procession To The Unknown Monster* so that he could finish it as an easel painting, and so its replacement was entirely Crane's work (fig. 111). Despite his adherence to Burne-Jones's designs, Crane's 'strong personality unconsciously asserted itself'.¹¹⁰ In his *Reminiscences*, he commented that:

In the treatment I allowed myself considerable freedom, especially in the subjects not already commenced or carried far, though I endeavoured to preserve the spirit and feeling of the original designs.¹¹¹

It is fortunate that the frieze had been influenced in its design by Burne-Jones' increasing classicism; the contrast between the two artists' styles, though clearly perceptible, is not as staring as it may otherwise have been. Crane was, in Malcolm Bell's words:

...an artist who was sufficiently in sympathy with the designer to give a satisfactory appearance of unity to the whole.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ He was working on a frieze for the boudoir in her house at Prince's Gate. In his *Reminiscences* he described it as consisting of 'a design of white cockatoos with lemon and orange crests on a gold ground, connected by fanciful scroll-work in bronze green and red.' (p.166)

¹⁰⁹ Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences*, p.156

¹¹⁰ (*The Studio*, 15, (October 1898), p.4)

¹¹¹ Crane, *Reminiscences*, pp.168-9

¹¹² Bell, *A Record and Review*, p.46

Crane's figures possess a heaviness and lack of grace, however, which compare poorly with those by Burne-Jones. Although Crane was to carry out the painting, Burne-Jones remained involved in the redesign of some of the frieze panels. His revised design for the panel depicting Psyche's reception by the gods and goddesses, *Psyche Entering the Portals Of Olympus* (fig. 112), for example, shows a distinct progression in his understanding and implementation of the principles of mural decoration. The hilly landscape amidst which the figures were previously depicted was replaced with an architectural setting, the interior of a palace in which the bold vertical lines of regularly repeated pillars divide the narrow head of the arch from its base with particular success. Crane wrote to Howard regarding the redesign of the panel:

Jones...has designed a new background for the gods and goddesses. He made a rough sketch, which I have carried out, of a palace roof and pillars behind the figures, which give one a valuable level and perpendicular lines and works into the pointed form much better than the landscape would have done. ¹¹³

Howard replied from Italy, in anticipation:

I am...glad to hear that 'Psyche' is getting on. I shall be very anxious to see her when I get home. I suppose that I shall stay in London this next winter, and her presence will tend to cheer me in the absence of the Italian sun. ¹¹⁴

As 1878 approached its close, the panels were returned to Palace Green, Crane having proceeded as far as he was able in his studio. Here he and Burne-Jones continued with them together *in situ*, working from trestles. It was an amicable collaboration, echoing the early lighthearted days of working parties at Red House, as Crane recalled:

He [Burne-Jones] was always playing...while at work on this frieze...he pretended to assume the manner and language of the ordinary British workman 'on the job'...and when Mr Howard came in to see the progress of the work, he...would...insinuate the broadest hints about prospective cigars and drinks we were to enjoy at our host's expense. ¹¹⁵

Henry Holiday (1839-1927) also recalled the pair at work and his reminiscence highlights the camaraderie at work during the process:

¹¹³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/38. November 13th 1878

¹¹⁴ Crane, *Reminiscences*, p.188

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.170

· There is a note in my diary of a pleasant lunch at Lord Carlisle's. Burne-Jones and Walter Crane were there. They had been co-operating in a frieze round the dining room...and they were giving a final look round, and putting some finishing touches. After lunch they returned to their work. E B-J [sic] was up a pair of steps, and when Lord Carlisle asked him a question on a technical point, he said, as if he were a house-painter, "Y'see, m'Lord, we does it this way," and having given the explanation, turned to Crane who was on another pair of steps, and said, "Ow haffable these nobs are Bill; they talk to yer!" ¹¹⁶

As far as Crane was concerned, their period of collaboration brought the work to its conclusion¹¹⁷ and he records how there was a Christmas party at Palace Green to celebrate the event. However, further complications were still to arise.

The decoration of the woodwork surrounding the frieze panels was begun towards the end of 1879. The matter had been placed in Webb's hands. He, however, was unwilling to make a decision as to the colour that should frame them, and insisted on asking Morris's opinion. As a consequence, Morris was commissioned to design 'ornaments for the mouldings round the pictures, the curved braces of ceiling, and the upper part of the panelling'¹¹⁸ and, in addition, to add extracts from the verse tale itself to contextualise the panels. In its execution, Morris could employ his skill and pleasure in calligraphic forms; he had begun to school himself intensively in calligraphy from 1870, once the *Earthly Paradise* had been completed. Although relishing the prospect of working on the frieze, he advised Howard that such lettering was in fact 'a very difficult business'.¹¹⁹ The lettering was accommodated in a narrow frieze running between the upper decorated panels of the dado and the plain ones below. The dado panels immediately beneath the pictorial frieze were worked in flat gold and silver, with a stylised foliate design on a

¹¹⁶ Holiday, *Reminiscences of My Life*, p.268

¹¹⁷ There was some confusion over the amount Crane was to receive for his work on the frieze. In 1878 he was paid £300 with a further £100 in January the following year. He wrote to Howard acknowledging its receipt: "You must let the remaining hundred be quite at your convenience..". Howard's reply is one of consternation; he thought that he had acquitted himself "of my money debt towards you" but continued, "...do not let the matter embarrass your mind. I had rather pay £100 more than I had expected, than give you a moment's annoyance." Crane appears to have been equally unhappy at the prospect of Howard being out of pocket but the account book for 1879 shows that a further payment of £100 was in fact made to him, bringing Crane's fee for the work to a total of £500.

¹¹⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. Morris to Rosalind Howard, December 13th 1879

¹¹⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, March 23rd 1881

vertical axis. The corbels were decorated with a small diaper pattern in deep red upon a burnished gold ground, whilst the spandrels of the ceiling braces were painted with scrolling acanthus leaves in shades of brown and russet. The remainder of the woodwork was painted a dramatic shade of blue-green, and the ceiling was painted in primrose yellow and white with a gridlike arrangement of flowerheads and foliage (fig. 113). It is evident that Morris, whose designs were at this date increasing in their elaboration and richness, wished to extend the scheme to incorporate the lower panelling too; Howard referred to his suggestion rather wryly:

Morris...is now talking of a 'little' ornament on the lower panels: before he has done it is clear that the whole room will be thickly coated with gold and precious stones.¹²⁰

This additional decoration was never carried out. As it was, it was later to be observed that the room glowed 'like a page of an illuminated missal'.¹²¹

Charles Roberts recalled that following Morris' addition of the lettering and other decorative ornaments:

Burne-Jones was not at all pleased as they put his panels into the shade and he had to do a good deal of work in heightening their colour.¹²²

Morris's vivid contextual decoration had made the frieze panels seem rather dark, and in 1882 Burne-Jones began the self-imposed task of retouching the frieze. He expressed dissatisfaction with the finish achieved by Crane because of its apparently unstable and vulnerable surface, which he claimed could be wiped clean of pigment with a dry duster. In addition, he considered the colour scheme inharmonious with Morris' yellow and white ceiling. In November 1882 the panels were removed to The Grange. Howard was optimistic concerning this new phase:

He is to finish the dining room pictures in his own studio! This is a great point as they may now possibly be finished someday.¹²³

¹²⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, March 23rd 1881

¹²¹ (*The Studio*, 15, (October 1898), p.3)

¹²² Roberts, *The Radical Countess*, p.35. Roberts' observation regarding Burne-Jones' displeasure is not corroborated by other sources.

¹²³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, 10th November 1882

Burne-Jones employed his studio assistant T.M. Rooke (1842-1942)¹²⁴ to work on the architectural and landscape elements whilst himself concentrating on the figures. Some details, such as Psyche's lamp and casket, were enriched with raised and gilded gesso. He wrote to Howard regarding the lunette-shaped panel, *Psyche Entering The Portals Of Olympus*, evidently pleased with the improvements he had wrought:

...it is...looking lovely - Rooke has worked on it and I have changed every face and most feet and drapery and strengthened the colour throughout.¹²⁵

His enthusiasm for the project is evident, as his reply to an enquiry from Howard demonstrates:

Have I seen what Rooke is doing?!!!!! I should think I have - I'm painting **all** the figures myself - have redesigned bits of background **all over** - and the result is good...at least it matches Mr Morris's ceiling now!...I think you will think it a very great improvement - the room looks lighter in every way.¹²⁶

The fact that he considered it necessary to alter so much can hardly have been flattering to Crane, and several contemporaries, amongst them Walford Graham Robertson (1866-1948), recorded his irritation over Burne-Jones' reappropriation of the frieze.¹²⁷ However, Crane's own contribution to the scheme did not go unnoticed. In 1882 Dr Nevin, an American churchman, saw the frieze during a visit to London, and commissioned Crane to design and paint a frieze of Longfellow's poem *The Skeleton In Armour* to be 'treated in that sort of way'¹²⁸ for his house in Newport, America. This Crane executed whilst in Rome.

Howard's response to the changes which had been wrought was not as positive as

¹²⁴ Thomas Mathews Rooke attended the National School of Art and then the Royal Academy Schools during the 1860s. For twenty years from 1871 he worked as Burne-Jones' studio assistant. He was a talented watercolourist, and from 1878, on Burne-Jones's recommendation, Rooke was commissioned by Ruskin to travel Europe making detailed drawings of buildings threatened by decay or over-zealous restoration. He ceased travelling abroad when he was seventy, but continued painting until only a few years before his death. He died aged ninety-nine.

¹²⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated. 1882

¹²⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated. 1882

¹²⁷ see Robertson, *Time Was*, p.46

¹²⁸ Castle Howard Archive, Crane - Howard J22/38. October 16th 1882

Burne-Jones had anticipated; the alterations to the backgrounds were satisfactory enough, but the reworking of faces and figures, which Burne-Jones was unwilling to deputise, was still far from finished. His motivation was undermined by news of Rossetti's deteriorating health, and a crisis of sympathy with Morris found him 'tired, depressed, confused, stupid'.¹²⁹ He also had in mind several other projects, the *Book of Flowers*, his absorption with plans for *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*¹³⁰ and the vexing question of the American church in Rome¹³¹ amongst them. He had also been working on a second version of *Phyllis and Demophon* over the winter, which by February still required at least another month's work. Aware of Howard's disappointment, Burne-Jones wrote to him in explanation:

As to Palace Green I am sore vexed - I wanted to make it a delight - and I gather from Morris and what you say that you are disappointed - of course it isn't near done - but...I have but Sundays to give and in winter it can't happen often because of the dark...I shall go for a Sunday and see what can be done to hurry at least one side to completion - that is if we have no fogs - but I am tired with work and not well...¹³²

The Cupid and Psyche frieze was eventually finished later that year. Howard's final verdict on the scheme, which had taken a dozen years to complete, remains unknown. Critical opinion of it, however, has ranged from the ecstatic:

It would be a rash statement to affirm of the decoration of any single apartment that it was absolutely the best example of the style it obeyed. Yet if ever it were safe to speak thus unreservedly, it might be concerning the beautiful morning-room at the Earl of Carlisle's town house...¹³³

to the more critically measured:

¹²⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated, 1882. Rossetti died in April the same year.

¹³⁰ This will be expanded upon in the succeeding section.

¹³¹ Burne-Jones had been commissioned in 1881 to design a vast mosaic scheme for the apse and choir of St Paul's, the American Protestant Episcopal Church in Rome. The commission proved a frustrating one for Burne-Jones, who was unable to visit the site. He despaired when the Italian firm making the mosaics sent him a trial figure and he found that they had followed neither the colour scheme nor the outline of his design. The scheme lay dormant for a number of years when funding ran out, and remained unfinished at the time of his death.

¹³² Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Burne-Jones to Howard, February 1882

¹³³ (*The Studio*, XV, no. 67 (1898), p.3).

His preoccupation of the narrative hampered him. This is a weakness in the scheme and shows how the artist was compelled to condense the images ¹³⁴

Whatever its ultimate faults or merits, it cannot be denied that Cupid and Psyche frieze provided not only a spectacular adornment to the room for which it was designed, but also invaluable experience for those involved with its production. That it reached completion was due to the forbearance evinced, as on so many subsequent occasions, by Howard. The responsibility that he felt as both patron and friend to those from whom he commissioned work was to prove of incalculable worth at such times, and cast him in the role of facilitator. Burne-Jones went on to execute a decorative frieze for the music room at 4 Carlton Gardens, the home of A.J. Balfour. This, the Perseus series, was also based on the *Earthly Paradise*.¹³⁵ Burne-Jones wrote to Howard regarding the task:

...he wants pictures to go round a room, some story or another...but I don't know a bit what I shall paint, but if you were here we could go & potter over the room and settle what to do. ¹³⁶

Progress with this scheme was also slow and only four of the panels were completed.

The Boudoir

In 1879 the redecoration of the boudoir, a 'recess' at the far end of the drawing room beyond the dividing archway, was undertaken whilst the Howards were abroad. Morris was to oversee the project personally. The space was to be decorated as a backdrop for *The Annunciation* (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight) (fig. 114)¹³⁷ by Burne-Jones, which he had exhibited that year at the Grosvenor Gallery along with the Pygmalion

¹³⁴ Waters (*Apollo*, CII, no. 165 (1975), p.340).

¹³⁵ Balfour, one of the 'Souls' who were habitués of the Grosvenor Gallery and admirers of Burne-Jones, Watts and Whistler, was introduced to Burne-Jones by Lady Airlie. There were many mutual acquaintances linking the Souls and the Howards: Princess Louise, the Percy Wyndhams, Henry James and Edward Clifford.

¹³⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. 1875

¹³⁷ The painting remained in the Howard family until 1922 when it was sold following Rosalind Howard's death. It was subsequently acquired by Lord Leverhulme and is now in the gallery at Port Sunlight. An etching was made by Felix Jasinski (1862-1901) who executed etchings of several works by the artist; an edition of 350 artist's proofs on vellum costing 10 guineas each, and 25 presentation proofs. There was no other state.

series, and for which Howard had paid £120. The painting was begun in 1876, the model for the head of Mary being Mrs Prinsep's niece Julia Stephen.¹³⁸ Burne-Jones took the setting of narrow arched passageways from his Italian sketchbooks of 1871 and 1873. The palette was restrained, tending towards a harmony of gold and grey, in contrast to *Laus Veneris* (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) and *Chant d'Amour* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), which he had exhibited the previous year. Initially, yellow *Sunflower* was selected for the walls, but proved unsuitable:

Georgie told you from me how fatal the gold was to the picture...it did destroy with all its glitter the quiet of the picture & took the colour out of it somehow.¹³⁹

Both Burne-Jones and Morris trekked to Palace Green several times with fabrics and wallpaper samples before they were satisfied that the right patterns and colours had at last been found. Here we see a true meeting of the fine and decorative arts in microcosm, described with the vividness of the poet:

Ned and I went to Palace Green yesterday and our joint conclusion was that the best hanging for the walls of the boudoir would be the enclosed madder-printed cotton:¹⁴⁰ it brings out the greys of the picture better than anything else. Also I think it would make a pretty room with the woodwork painted a light blue-green colour like a starling's egg; and if you wanted drapery about it we have beautiful stuffs of shades of red that would brighten all up without fighting with the wall-hangings...¹⁴¹

Burne-Jones, despite praising the final choice of rose-coloured wall-covering, chosen to harmonise with the tones of the picture and heightening the effect of its greens and blues, thought his painting was seen to its best advantage thus:

...it looks best when you can see no surrounding at all but catch a glimpse of it through the doorway, and then it looks like a vision...¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Wife of Leslie Stephen and mother of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell

¹³⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/55. Burne-Jones to Rosalind Howard. Undated

¹⁴⁰ This was a dense pattern of deep rose pink on a parchment-coloured ground originally designed in 1876 and one of a group of fourteen designs which by 1878 were being produced for Morris & Co. by Thomas Wardle at Leek in Derbyshire.

¹⁴¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. December 15th 1879

¹⁴² Castle Howard Archive, J23/55. Burne-Jones to Rosalind Howard. Undated

It is possible that Burne-Jones was influenced in his thinking by the unorthodox hanging-techniques at the Grosvenor Gallery, which fostered an intimacy between viewer and artwork, evoking a more deeply-felt response. He was prepared to admit that such an arrangement would be a sacrifice to 'fine and pompous effect',¹⁴³ however, and it was upon Morris that he relied to envisage the final counterbalance of tone and colour in the space. With the scheme finalised, he acknowledged that 'no picture I have ever done will be so kindly placed.'¹⁴⁴ Rosalind Howard's account book records the repainting of the woodwork in blue-green, and the purchase of red *Iris* chintz for the lining of the walls in the 'sitting room', an alternative term used for the boudoir in other sources. In summertime, a 'shot red & gold & green'¹⁴⁵ Indian silk curtain was hung in front of the empty firegrate. The seat furniture in the boudoir was upholstered in red *Honeysuckle* chintz. The remaining furniture in the room was a heterogeneous mix of old, new, English and Far Eastern pieces, some items evidently chosen for their sentimental associations rather than for conformity with the room's decorative scheme.¹⁴⁶

Other features

The interior at Palace Green had many other features to recommend it: unique and imposing fireplaces designed by Webb and fitted with eighteenth-century Delft tiles (fig. 115),¹⁴⁷ a spacious studio for Howard at the top of the house, and the impressively proportioned drawing room divided by pointed arches with its ceiling painted by Morris

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Inventory. Private collection

¹⁴⁶ The aforementioned inventory itemises two Japanese lacquer cabinets brought from Japan by Rosalind Howard's brother Lylulph Stanley, and a third Japanese cabinet in wood, a gift from Charles Howard in 1867

¹⁴⁷ Rosalind Howard recorded in her journal for February 22nd 1868 that in Antwerp they purchased '500 dutch tiles', probably those incorporated into the fireplaces at Palace Green. Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/14

and the simple frieze of creeping willow boughs previously mentioned. The house also boasted a grand spiral staircase on the landing of which stood an organ decorated with a panel painting by Burne-Jones:

EB [sic] has done a beautiful picture for me in my organ...It is most lovely in colour & composition & sentiment. It is a man in red drapery playing on the organ. ¹⁴⁸

Georgiana Burne-Jones, the most musically gifted of the circle, played the instrument regularly. She had her own key to the house and, if the Howards were abroad or in the north, would let herself in to practice. The following extract from a letter to Rosalind Howard conjures up a vivid image of the house at such times:

Thanks for your leave to have the organ bench lowered - I have...been twice to practice since my return...your house looks desolate beyond words all done up in pinafores and curlpapers. ¹⁴⁹

Palace Green was largely furnished with objects purchased from Morris & Co., to which were added glassware by Powell of Whitefriars and Salviati, and art pottery by the likes of the Martin Brothers and Dunmore. Charles Augustus Howell procured several large items of furniture for them.¹⁵⁰ However, the Howards also scoured curiosity shops and Japanese shops. The result was an eclectic mix, as objects gathered during Howard's travels abroad gradually filled his home. Several of the pieces of furniture purchased from the Firm were those with a japanned finish in black and gold, which were to find such popularity in the coming decade amongst adherents of the Aesthetic Movement. These drew on the burgeoning influence of the East which prompted ubiquitous

¹⁴⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/102/16. October 28th 1872.

¹⁴⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

¹⁵⁰ Correspondence attests that Howard, rather than his wife, was Howell's principal collaborator on the matter of furnishings. Howard regarded him as an arbiter of good taste, writing to him: 'The list of furniture which you have got for us sounds delightful...I really feel that we are all this time abusing your exceeding kindness and good nature - however, I cannot cease doing so, [as] as far as I am concerned it is such an immense advantage for us to have the help of your taste and wonderful skill in the discovery of pretty things.' (John Rylands Library, Ms 1280. Howard to Howell, January 1st 1869). However, it appears from correspondence between D.G. Rossetti and Howell that he took rather less care with some purchases than Howard supposed. In one instance, Howell was to offer a cabinet to Howard which he had procured for Rossetti. Rossetti, who had already paid for the item, considered it so hideous that he declared he was prepared to give it away should Howard not want it at the inflated price that Howell proposed charging him for it.

references to Japanese, Egyptian and Islamic styles within the decorative arts.¹⁵¹

Despite its role as a family home, Palace Green seems to have been in an almost constant state of transition, as Rosalind Howard's extensive household accounts indicate: startlingly large quantities of wallhangings, fabrics and furnishings are listed as having been ordered for the house well into the 1880s. In later years the Howards also regularly turned to Liberty's, as importers of the Eastern wares and fabrics for which Howard developed a decided taste.

Howard filled Palace Green with paintings. Although there were a few works by old masters, the majority were by his contemporaries: Legros, Burne-Jones, Costa, Crane, Bateman, Rossetti, Hughes, Armstrong, Corbet. This highly personal and idiosyncratic collection of pictures was the subject of an article by Sidney Colvin in the *Magazine of Art*, in which Howard was described not as a collector, but 'an artist and the friend of artists.'¹⁵² Years later, Palace Green was the subject of another article, 'The Cupid and Psyche Frieze', in *The Studio*¹⁵³ (October 1898). Both articles emphasise the quality of the paintings adorning the walls of the house, yet both also place careful emphasis on the patent individuality of which it was redolent:

The house is in sharp contrast to the average town mansion, where Louis XIV, XV, and XVI, varied by a trace of Adam, reign supreme. Compared with the average Park Lane mansion it looks severe and simple; but it is pre-eminently an artist's home...Nothing astonishes the visitor - room after room continues the initial idea and seems exactly what might be expected...By thus avoiding emphasis of all kinds, the treasures it holds seem but ordinary fittings, until more curious inspection shows many of them to be unique masterpieces. The majority of these are modern - a singularly pleasing exception to the average "palace" of today, which, if it holds masterpieces of any kind, is singularly careful that they shall be of goodly age, hall-marked as it were with official approval of their sterling value.¹⁵⁴

Palace Green evidently bore the stamp of Howard's unorthodoxy.

The house quickly became a meeting place for society's creative elite; a list of the

¹⁵¹ See Appendix 5 for further details of the decorative schemes at Palace Green

¹⁵² Colvin (*Magazine of Art*, VII (1884), p.83).

¹⁵³ *The Studio*, 67 (October 1898), pp. 3-13

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.13

brilliant and talented who dined or debated there would make lengthy and varied reading, including (apart from artist friends such as the Poynters, Leighton, Val Prinsep, Walter Crane and George Price Boyce) such notables as Gladstone, Browning and Tennyson. As Sidney Colvin was later to write:

No more exceptional or attractive young couple gathered about them...a more varied company of talents and distinctions whether in art, literature or politics.¹⁵⁵

Palace Green followed in the footsteps of Little Holland House and Valentine Prinsep's home in Holland Park Road as fertile ground for nurturing creativity and innovation. It has been described thus:

...Palace Green...became one of the most important centres for artists to meet one another. Later, it was the nexus between crosscurrents of British, French and Italian art.¹⁵⁶

In later times, when the recollection of the gaiety of their early years together was tarnished by estrangement and separation and her delight in their London home had long since faded, Rosalind Howard described Palace Green to her daughter Dorothy with apparent disdain:

'Built for parties' my mother said, and sitting-room space 'was sacrificed to a fine arrival staircase. Not very sensible.'¹⁵⁷

This ascerbity perhaps reflects a residual bitterness towards Philip Webb, from whom she had become distanced during the late 1870s. The relationship never quite recaptured its equilibrium of the early days. When she and Howard separated, Rosalind relinquished any preferential claims to Palace Green. Her perception of her ostracism from the house caused her recollections of it to become tinged with bitterness. In 1908 her distaste for Palace Green overcame her, and she began to search in earnest for another London residence:

My mother took a strong distaste for 1 Palace Green. This was active enough to make her look about for other houses... four years before my father died. He would have loathed a move, and she did nothing effective about it until after he

¹⁵⁵ Sidney Colvin, *Memories and Notes of Persons and Places*, pp.22-23

¹⁵⁶ Vallance (*Art Journal* (1900), p.1).

¹⁵⁷ Henley p.45

died.¹⁵⁸

It was at 13 Kensington Palace Gardens, a disproportionately large residence for a widow, that Rosalind re-established herself following her husband's death in 1911. In 1877, when Lady Harrington and her daughter occupied the property, a staff of twenty servants had been employed. The house, of doubtful architectural merit, had been designed by Decimus Burton in 1853 and had been criticised in *The Builder*. This 'hideous huge gothic mansion',¹⁵⁹ which would never see the 'vista of balls and hospitality'¹⁶⁰ that she anticipated when she purchased it, was a sad contrast to the home she had left behind.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p.141

¹⁵⁹ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.172. Source uncited

¹⁶⁰ Henley, *Rosalind Howard*, p.142

CHAPTER 8

**The Flodden Field bas relief
and redesign of the library at Naworth 1880-1885**

When during the 1870s plans arose for the building of new properties on the Naworth estate in Cumbria, or alterations were required either there or at Castle Howard,¹ it was inevitably Webb to whom Howard turned. He undertook repairs to Brampton's Moat House, designed a row of cottages for the town (these were never built, however), and designed Four Gables for the Naworth estate land agent and Green Lanes House for the vicar of Brampton. In 1876 Howard commissioned Webb to design a railing for the exercise ground at Naworth. This minor undertaking gave rise to correspondence which encapsulates both Webb's unstinting attention to detail in his work practices and the tenor of his relationship with Howard. Having evaluated the terrain and taken into account the proposed landscaping of the site, he informed Howard:

It seemed to me that the rolling balls would have a tendency to go down the slope. This does not matter, but when the slope is planted, the continued loss of balls would be troublesome. I have therefore put in a bottom rail 2" above the ground line which would stop all but high fliers,²

Even such a minor commission as this was thoroughly researched; Webb cited his source for the railing thus:

If you look out plate xviii in Logan's *Oxford* you will see [at] (Queen's College) a lower rail.³

¹ As well as overseeing various repairs at Castle Howard, Webb also designed the window frames for the chapel, refurbished between 1870 and 1875. Morris & Co. were commissioned to supply the stained glass, for which Burne-Jones made new designs. This was at a time when Lord Lanerton, the eighth Earl's younger brother, lived there. It was on Howard's recommendation that the Firm was commissioned.

² Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Webb to Howard, September 8th 1876

³ Ibid

As ever, he took into account the impact of the proposed railings on their surroundings, and expressed the wish that they be left ‘...in the natural oak...as I believe white paint would make the place a little too like a racecourse.’⁴ Correspondence makes no further reference to the exercise ground, save for one mention of it made by Webb who, the following summer, refers to the regrettable after-effects of having taken advantage of Naworth’s new facility:

I was stiff for two days after my bout on the race course, but my ‘bow-window’ as Morris calls his belly, is still too pronounced for a man of 46 1/2 years of age. I hold with Falstaff that it is grief that blows one out. ⁵

As the decade neared its end, however, Rosalind Howard was becoming increasingly decided in her views, and outspoken in their expression. Her pertinacity gradually gave way to an assertiveness which was later to develop into aggression, autocracy and the frustration of misplaced ambition on behalf of her husband. Webb had already proved himself a force to be reckoned with when perceiving his designs to be under threat, and his bristliness by no means diminished with age. Howard, deeply committed to his painting and with little inclination to pursue avenues unconnected with the arts, desired only that which was virtually unattainable for a man in his position: a life with as little distraction and confrontation as possible and ample time to devote to his painting. It was inevitable that stresses would at some stage result from this combination of characteristics.

As long as they had known each other, the social chasm between he and Howard had been an oft-repeated focus for Webb’s humour:

Will dine with pleasure...but ’tis like making an appointment with a shadow for...you have been away so long that I’ve nearly learned to do without the substance. This comes of disporting yourself in Italy, leaving one of the toiling millions to take care of himself. ⁶

He reinforced it by untiring repetition in later correspondence. It was not without a certain glee that he contrasted their relative positions, on one occasion declining an

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Webb to Howard, July 17th 1877

⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. Webb to Howard, June 26th 1874

invitation to Naworth thus:

Two of our particular friends have...given such graphic accounts of Naworth as to make it unnecessary for me to travel so far...See, you luxurious fellow, how your most faithful of slaves stands to HIS post. ⁷

However, the guests received at both Palace Green and Naworth were drawn predominantly from artistic and literary circles. At Naworth, Howard and those of his visitors who were fellow artists would spend long days sketching together in the locality. Such gatherings did not conform to the conventions of the society house-party, and Howard himself avowed that 'the society of the world does not much amuse me.'⁸

During 1878 there was a minor *contretemps* between Howard and Webb following the highly fatiguing period of the building of St Martin's church. Both men were suffering from the strain of combatting the many dissonant voices clamouring to be heard on this by now most trying of subjects. The cause of Howard's remonstrance is no longer certain, but Webb's reply remains:

Your most Parliamentary but very angry letter, rec[eiv]'d this morning, made me laugh heartily. Alas poor Arch't [sic] ! - had no trouble, no bother since Nov. 1874. Original design, alterations, adaptations, persuadings and redesignings considerable: with a list of 140 SHEETS of working drawings, & these in duplicate by tracing!! If the damned arch't [sic] has spent a penny...he has paid out of his own pocket £150, and all for glory, unsolicited glory. ⁹

This was not a reaction calculated to pacify, and evidently Howard's exasperation was only increased by Webb's flippancy. Webb's next letter to Howard displays a rare glimpse beneath the facade of comic disconcert or boisterous belligerence behind which he was usually so careful to conceal his true self:

Alack, alack that I should have vexed you - I had no such intention, believe me my good friend: socially speaking I cannot afford to do so. Truth to tell I stand too isolated as it is, but I blame none but myself...Please accept my appeal

⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. September 2nd 1874. The two 'particular friends' were Morris and Burne-Jones.

⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/4. Howard to Rosalind Howard, December 20th 1883

⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. August 19th 1878. Webb was occupied with several other commissions for the Bells at the time; their empathetic positivism must have presented a welcome contrast to the Brampton building committee's injurious lack of consensus.

to your better nature, and forgive my feverish egotism.¹⁰

Webb's opening statement is intriguingly ambiguous: it could be understood as referring to his professional reliance on Howard as a regularly commissioning patron. It may equally well be interpreted as a reference to his limited circle of close personal relationships, upon which he was heavily emotionally reliant. On this occasion the aberration was a relatively insignificant one, and soon rectified.

It may be imagined, then, how painful would be more major rifts. In September 1879 architectural alterations, in Howard's opinion minor, were carried out at Naworth without prior consultation with Webb.¹¹ It is unclear whether this was a genuine oversight or whether Howard, aware of Webb's uncompromising stance with regard to the preservation of the original fabric of the castle, had deliberately omitted to discuss the matter with him. Webb's reaction was furious. In a lengthy and calculatedly formal letter to Howard, he made pointed reference to the damaged status of their relationship by referring to it as a 'professional' one,¹² categorising Howard as his client and underlining the affront to his own authority:

I don't want to ride the high horse with any of my clients, least of all with you, but this way of treating a business man's experience and judgment would be enough to upset a much easier temper than mine. I think it would be better for you to get some competent architect...who would either work smoothly under your directions, or would have power directly...to get done only what HE thought should be done.¹³

He promptly resigned as estate architect¹⁴ and with a show of unconvincing bravado he

¹⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. August 21st 1878

¹¹ A doorway had been cut through the gable wall at the northwest corner of the castle to enable workmen to use the back staircase there without having to cause inconvenience by passing through any of the rooms.

¹² He had made a clear distinction between friendship and business early on in their relationship, writing to Rosalind Howard, 'the inmates of Naworth Castle are often in my mind, the thoughts, kind, and quite free from a business taint.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. August 19th, 1867

¹³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. August 11th 1879

¹⁴ Webb had undertaken various minor commissions on and around the Naworth estate and Brampton from the early 1870s. He was preceded in the post by Charles Ferguson, a local architect, who was reinstated as estate architect on Webb's resignation.

assured Howard that 'no friendly bones have been broken'.¹⁵ However, he kept all correspondence immediately following this debacle to strictly professional matters.

Howard's income increased considerably following the death of his father in 1879 and that of his uncle, Lord Lanerton, the following year, allowing him to purchase and commission with less restraint than had hitherto been the case, and extensive redecoration at Naworth was undertaken from 1880. It is interesting to note that this was precisely the time at which Morris and Burne-Jones were engaged in their painstaking redecoration of the boudoir at Palace Green. In the library at Naworth Howard recognised the potential for a further decorative scheme which afforded an opportunity to encapsulate the combined creative energies of Webb, Morris and Burne-Jones. In what may have been a conciliatory gesture, Webb agreed to undertake the remodelling of the space, and a renewed warmth of feeling ensued.¹⁶

Originally a medieval chapel, the library was situated in that part of the castle which had been destroyed by fire in 1844 and subsequently restored by Anthony Salvin. This would perhaps explain why Webb was now willing to undertake extensive alterations when previously he had shown a marked unwillingness to do so.¹⁷ In redesigning the library he would be endowing a space, already compromised, with his own vision. This was a very different prospect from architectural intervention in those areas of the castle which had remained essentially unchanged.

Webb's design incorporated barrel-vaulting along the fireplace wall. This was a notional reverberation of the chapel's architecture before the 1844 fire, and a cross-reference to the barrel-vaulting in the north aisle at St Martin's church. It suggested the links between the two buildings, much in the same manner as the twin clockfaces of Naworth and St

¹⁵ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. August 11th 1879

¹⁶ Although the tenor of Webb's relationship with Howard was restored, that between Rosalind and Webb never fully recovered its equilibrium.

¹⁷ In 1874 Webb had written to Rosalind Howard: 'Pleasant Naworth, I know of no country house so free from the things which make them so really dismal, as yours; you will understand, then why I do not wish to be an instrument of change in it.' Castle Howard Archive J22/64. October 26th 1874.

Martin's had done several years previously.¹⁸ Such features, cross-pollinating the secular with the ecclesiastical, reflect Webb's atheism. Galleries were added at either end of the library, with access by two boxed-in spiral staircases and recessed cartouches embellishing the panelling beneath (fig. 116). As Macleod observes:

...one of the most influential 'strains' that he adopted was the Byzantine. There can be little doubt that to him, as to Morris, the relevance of Byzantine art was first defined by Ruskin in "The Nature of Gothic" from *The Stones of Venice*...It fitted their historical criteria almost perfectly: it was the infusion of freshness and 'barbarity' to the constructional achievements of ancient Rome...it was first and foremost a movement whose inventive detail enhanced but never dominated its structural expressiveness..¹⁹

Effective use was also made of recurrent themes employed in Webb's work elsewhere: pierced fretwork,²⁰ linenfold panelling and gridlike balustrades which added a lightness and delicacy offsetting the pervasive spirit of baronial robustness.²¹ In Webb's hands, these eclectic stylistic references indeed became 'evocative yet elusive'.²²

Howard's significance as a patron to Burne-Jones is indicated by the sheer volume of commissions placed with the artist between the mid-1870s and early 1880s. During this time Burne-Jones was engaged intermittently on the Cupid and Psyche frieze at Palace Green as well as the easel painting *Dies Domini* (Location unknown),²³ the magnificent east window at St Martin's in Brampton for which he made new designs for sixteen

¹⁸ In 1874 Howard commissioned Webb to design and execute a clock-face for the courtyard at Naworth. The design was replicated for the clocktower at St Martin's.

¹⁹ Macleod, *Architectural Ideology*, p.47

²⁰ In his description of *Clouds Lethaby* remarks upon Webb's 'liking for fretted patterns in decorations' (*Lethaby, Philip Webb*, p.104.), referring to the fretwork panels and recessed patterning in dado panels used as forms of decoration there.

²¹ Webb paid a passing reference to Japonisme in his 'grid' balustrading. He incorporated square latticework at Smeaton Manor, built in 1878-9 for Major Godman, Sir Lowthian Bell's son-in-law. At *Clouds* the inclusion of fretwork panels and recessed patterning in dado panels were continued as forms of decoration.

²² Macleod, *Architectural Ideology*, p.47

²³ *Dies Domini* was purchased by Howard for £450 in 1881 and hung in the drawing room at Palace Green.

figures, another window for the church as a memorial to Elizabeth Howard, and two designs for bas reliefs of *The Nativity* and *The Entombment*. He had at the same time been working on his second *Annunciation* (1876-79) (fig. 114), purchased by Howard for the boudoir at Palace Green. The painting had been undertaken at a time when Burne-Jones felt particularly dispirited, and evinced the recurrent melancholia to which he was prone. In his correspondence with Howard during the late 1870s and early 1880s, Burne-Jones referred repeatedly to the difficulties he was encountering in bringing major works to completion, often returning endlessly to unfinished canvases with a sense of hopeless dissatisfaction:

...the Annunciation has come to present grief & I have put it by & have only to exhibit that weary weary *Laus Veneris* & one or 2 other weary old things of which the world that is not already sickened soon will be - I don't care...of course I'm sick...to the heart about public things & have ceased to talk but not to think of them - I wish you were coming back - I wish Morris wasn't going - I wish most things weren't as they are. ²⁴

His need for the proximity of those upon whom his emotional reliance was founded is self-evident. Such negative self-evaluation was clouded by the blackness of depression, and was refuted by his enormous popularity with a public which perceived him as being at the very height of his powers. He had burst upon a wider audience following the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, and his celebrity would not begin to wane for years to come. Despite his words he exhibited eleven works at the Grosvenor that year, Henry James commenting that he had contributed 'far and away the most interesting and remarkable things in the exhibition.'²⁵ Georgiana Burne-Jones was later to recall that 1881 'seemed from its effects to have been more than twelve months in length, and in the end Edward was a distinctly older man.'²⁶ This is confirmed in correspondence between Howard and Rosalind, in which Howard was to comment the following year

²⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated. 1878. Howard was wintering in Italy, where Morris and his family were shortly to join them.

²⁵ Sweeney (ed.), *The Painter's Eye*, p.162. James's review was originally published in the *Nation*, April 18th 1878.

²⁶ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p.116

that 'he is not quite the old Ned'.²⁷

The thirty-four-foot space above the library fireplace was to be occupied by a work by Burne-Jones: a triptych of his long-cherished subject *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*. During the 1880s an increasing mannerism characterised Burne-Jones' work, the Michelangelesque muscularity of figures such as those in his reworking of *Phyllis and Demophon*, *The Tree of Forgiveness* (exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1882) being counterbalanced by the attenuation of the figures in much of his decorative and illustrative designs. Large-scale paintings of great ambition such as *The Golden Stairs*, conceived in 1872 and completed in 1880, dominated Burne-Jones' output at this date. *Arthur in Avalon* was a subject which had haunted the artist for years and which he finally felt compelled to tackle. Howard's commission provided a timely opportunity for him to do so.²⁸ *Arthur in Avalon*, together with the Flodden Field bas relief and subjects taken from the *Romaunt of the Rose*,²⁹ appear to be precursors to Burne-Jones' paintings of the 1890s. These signalled a retreat towards introspection and a return to the subject matter of his youth, largely dominated once more by English literary sources and folklore-based subjects. The Briar Rose series (Faringdon Collection Trust, Buscot Park), upon which Burne-Jones worked intermittently for twenty years between 1870 and 1890, enjoyed unprecedented popularity on being exhibited at Agnew's in 1890, and was subsequently sent on tour to Liverpool and Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel so that it could be viewed by a wider audience. However, Burne-Jones' paintings were not to be received with such *éclat* again, and as the 1890s progressed he perceived his popularity

²⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. November 10th 1882

²⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J23/105. Rosalind Howard's account book mistakenly indicates that *Arthur in Avalon* was conceived as a single frieze panel: she records a payment of £500 on account for 'Arthur in Avalon fresco'; it was in fact envisaged as a triptych. The painting was to be placed above the fireplace, a space measuring nine by thirty-four feet. The canvas of the work itself measures nine feet by twenty-one feet. A post-script is added to the account book entry which reads: 'At E Burne-Jones' death his wife gave to L'd Carlisle in repaym't of this advance of £500 Burne-Jones' picture of St George.'

²⁹ When the decoration of Northallerton Grange (designed by Webb and built 1872-6 for Isaac Lowthian Bell) was undertaken by Morris & Company, it was decided that the dining room should incorporate an elaborate textile frieze illustrating Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*. From this design were derived several easel paintings including *Love Leading the Pilgrim* and *The Pilgrim at the Gates of Idleness*.

to be on the wane. He and Morris drew more closely together again as the latter's preoccupation with Socialist activities was undermined by a gradual disillusionment with the machinations of the movement, if not its precepts, and the two worked collaboratively anew at the Kelmscott Press.

It is evident that Burne-Jones' reluctance to part with *Arthur in Avalon*, even to so close a friend as Howard, began to take root soon after he undertook the commission. As time passed it became clear that the complexity of his conception, and the length of time for which the subject had preoccupied him, were such that it burgeoned uncontrollably and was to become his *magnum opus*. As Georgiana Burne-Jones later recalled:

...the idea of it lay deep in Edward's mind and the scope of it grew until it ceased to suit its original purpose...³⁰

Howard's involvement with the saga of *Arthur in Avalon* continued for several years. As late as January 1885 the picture remained nominally his, although Burne-Jones' inability to reconcile himself to parting with it had become ever more apparent. He now confessed that he had miscalculated its cost, having already spent 'time unmeasurable'³¹ on it, and that it was beyond his power to estimate a sum for the finished work. Instead he suggested a new scheme for the space at Naworth:

...treating the same subject but making the figures few and big, life size at least and about 6 or 7 in number - and a background of apple trees only.³²

This suggestion made it clear to Howard that the commissioned work would in all probability never be his, and he agreed to relinquish his claims to it and consider an alternative.³³ Burne-Jones made an initial sketch,³⁴ his intention being to put aside that version of *Arthur in Avalon* which he now regarded as his own in order to complete the

³⁰ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p.116

³¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. January 1st 1885

³² Ibid.

³³ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p.116

³⁴ This sketch is in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

simplified version for Howard.³⁵ However, this second version, which was to have cost a princely £3000, was never executed. It is to be supposed that Howard was unwilling to divert Burne-Jones from a work which was evidently of profound importance to him for the sake of its reinterpretation in a lesser form. The library wall was hung instead with tapestries.

In 1882, with *Arthur in Avalon* still at an embryonic stage of development, Howard suggested that Burne-Jones consider a second commission, for a bas relief. Close examination of correspondence reveals that this was not envisaged as an alternative to *Arthur in Avalon*, as has previously been supposed,³⁶ but rather as an additional commission to be undertaken concurrently with the first. It was an idea which they had discussed two years previously and to which they now returned:

Ned...very much approves of the chimney bas relief and indeed got quite excited about it.³⁷

The resulting commission was for the design of a relief panel to be incorporated into the overmantel of the library fireplace, its subject being the battle of Flodden Field of 1513.³⁸ Both Howard and Stanley ancestors had played prominent roles in the battle: Sir Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, had been in command of the English army and was created a Knight of the Garter following the battle,³⁹ Lord Dacre had commanded the cavalry reserves, whilst Sir Edward Stanley had led the Lancashire and Cheshire Archers.

Despite the breadth of decorative work undertaken by Burne-Jones for Morris &

³⁵ without the battle scene. Although still included in the original version at this date, the battle scene was to be replaced later.

³⁶ See Harrison & Waters, *Burne-Jones*, p.154

³⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. Howard to Rosalind Howard, October 11th 1880

³⁸ There is some ambiguity about the original intentions for its medium. Philip Burne-Jones recalled that it was a 'design for metal' (*Mag. of Art*, XXIV, (1900), p.167), and indeed the other relief work executed by Boehm for Howard from Burne-Jones's designs were all bronzes.

³⁹ The Howard arms received the augmentation of a golden escutcheon with the demi-lion of Scotland pierced with an arrow.

Company over the years, *Flodden* fell within a small group of commissions from Howard for bas reliefs, which were unusual within his oeuvre.⁴⁰ The other two, companion pieces entitled *The Nativity* and *The Entombment* (fig. 117) were begun during the summer of 1879⁴¹ and completed the following spring.⁴² These small panels were incorporated into a memorial plaque erected in memory of Howard's parents at Lanercost Priory near Brampton (fig. 118). Both panels were executed, like *Flodden*, by Sir Edgar Boehm (1834-1890),⁴³ and installed at Lanercost in 1882. Webb informed Howard that:

You know how averse I am to interfering with or in any way cutting into such walls as those of Lanercost, and I was relieved I found a modern patch of walling on which to put the memorial...⁴⁴

In the first instance Randolph Caldecott was to model *Flodden*, but Burne-Jones expressed a preference for Boehm, attracted by the thought of having a more substantial design modelled by the sculptor, for whom he felt a marked admiration.⁴⁵

Flodden was undertaken in that spirit of exuberance which seems so often to have

⁴⁰ The most closely comparable work is perhaps the seal for the new University of Wales, designed in 1894. Although between 1878 and 1888 Burne-Jones made several designs for painted and gilded gesso relief panels, only a handful were actually executed and were works of far shallower relief than *Flodden*, such as the funerary monument to Laura Tennant commissioned in 1885 by Lady Horner (nee Frances Graham) for the parish church at Mells.

⁴¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. August 10th 1879. Burne-Jones to Howard: 'I am working this week on the little bronze nativity & Boehm will have both next week.'

⁴² Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. December 2nd 1879. Burne-Jones to Howard: '...if the ground is bronze then the subjects had better be gold but I liked the idea of marble - never mind - he will make it look good somehow...'. They remained ungilded. Rosalind Howard's account book records their cost, along with two unspecified medallions in bronze, as being £525.

⁴³ Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm Sculptor in Ordinary to Queen Victoria and a regular exhibitor at the Grosvenor Gallery. He was later commissioned by Howard to sculpt a memorial monument to his daughter Elizabeth, who died in infancy. The monument, for which Webb designed the plinth, was placed over her grave in the ruined north transept of Lanercost Priory. Modelled in terra-cotta, it represents a sleeping infant. The *modello* remains in the Howard family.

⁴⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/64. September 30th 1882

⁴⁵ Howard wrote to Rosalind on the matter: 'I shall ask Boehm first and if he cannot, will fall back on Caldecott.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. October 12th 1880

elaboration elsewhere, *Flodden* appears to have been a welcome respite, and one which was regarded by both Howard and Burne-Jones with a relative lightheartedness. Georgiana Burne-Jones recalled the commission:

Another entry in this year's list [1882] is: "Designed a panel of Flodden Battle, to be worked out by Boehm."...Edward enjoyed designing it: the fight was closely imagined and I remember how the long lines of level spears were used in contrast with the hurly-burly of the struggle. ⁴⁶ (fig. 119)

The Battle of Flodden Field is indebted both in spirit and composition to the battle scenes of Ucello; at the outset of his career in 1857, Burne-Jones had been greatly impressed by the left-hand panel of the triptych *The Rout of San Romano* (fig. 120), which had recently been acquired for the National Gallery. There are also similarities between *Flodden* and the depiction of the Battle of Marignan in the central panel of the tomb of the French king, Francis I (fig. 121), although *Flodden* avoids the ferocity of the latter. Howard later cited the reliefs on the sarcophagus of Maximilian I of Innsbruck as a further source for the decorative treatment of a battle scene.⁴⁷ In each case the shallow perspective accorded well with Burne-Jones's ideas on decorative design. He used the complex planes and undulations of the hilly landscape to great effect, ranging the clusters of warring forces along them, their pikes echoing the contours of the battlefield and exploiting to the full the dramatic potential of linearity. The elevated horizon line emphasises the scene's claustrophobic atmosphere.

The foreground figures in *Flodden* are reminiscent of the knights in the Briar Rose series. Save for the foot-soldiers engaged in weary one-to-one combat, they seem possessed by the same langour as the knights strewn across the canvas of *The Prince Enters the Briar Wood* (fig. 122). Lying contorted and disordered, they appear to have fallen under a soporific spell. As Waters observes, the recurrent theme of sleep, which symbolised escape, coincided with Burne-Jones' withdrawal from a world in which he

⁴⁶ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, II, p.120

⁴⁷ The panel taken from Boehm's mould, donated by Howard to Carlisle City Art Gallery in 1898, is accompanied by a letter specifying the sarcophagus of Maximilian of Innsbruck as a source for the treatment of *Flodden*. See footnote 64.

felt himself increasingly peripheral.⁴⁸ *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon* was to be Burne-Jones' ultimate manifestation of this sense of seclusion.

Just as he had shunned depicting the princess's awakening in *Sleeping Beauty* (the final subject of the Briar Rose series), preferring to present the very moment preceding it, so Burne-Jones likewise sought to capture the instant before the Scottish king's death in *Flodden*. Encapsulated at the very heart of the raging battle is a moment of breathtaking stillness: the scene is pervaded by a sense of climactic reverberation. The archers pause with their bows drawn back, preparing to pierce the empty air with arrows, and the advancing horses are frozen, rearing on their hind legs. This eerie stillness is emphasised still further by Nature's intercedence: the tossing hilltop trees fan the flames billowing from the tents of the Scottish camp to the right of the composition, and the banners of both sides swirl wildly. To the right, James IV of Scotland sinks to the ground, vainly clutching his sword as he falls, the weight of his shield too great for his ebbing strength.

Flodden took several years to complete and was an amalgam of several hands: Burne-Jones designed the figures and overall composition, Philip Webb was called in to assist with designing the horses and to be consulted over the heraldic devices incorporated into the banners of the design,⁴⁹ and Howard was to collaborate by devising the colour scheme and assisting Burne-Jones in tinting it.

The panel was modelled and cast. A significant proportion of 1882, however, was taken up with remodelling it, Burne-Jones having complained to Howard that Boehm had 'done divers[e] things he should not have done'⁵⁰ and failed to follow his design

⁴⁸ Harrison and Waters, *Burne-Jones*, p.151

⁴⁹ These included the Scottish Lion of James IV, the Howard Lion (Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey), the Dacre Bull (Lord Dacre) and the Eagle and Child (Sir Edward Stanley).

⁵⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/5. George Howard to Rosalind Howard, October 26th 1882. Burne-Jones was quite justified in his assertion; Boehm had indeed exercised considerable licence in working from a cartoon which was schematically pronounced. The inclusion of the lunging figure to the right, for example, significantly altered the dynamic of the composition. (fig. 123)

accurately. Consequently, his studio assistant Osmund Weeks⁵¹ was employed in reworking those features to which Burne-Jones objected. Correspondence suggests that the initial stages of reworking of the panel were carried out at Walter Crane's studio, which was requisitioned to house it whilst he was in Italy.⁵² By the end of the year he was cautiously optimistic about the outcome, commenting that it 'slowly grows hopeful',⁵³ although there remained extensive reworking still to be done:

Weekes [sic] is at it 3 or 4 days a week - he has carved new spear shafts, he has remodelled the king - I made new drawings for it. He has cast out the archers bodily and made a new relief of that part from a careful drawing I made...⁵⁴

Progress was, however, lamentably slow. There is little mention of *Flodden* for a further two years, and it joined *Arthur in Avalon* in remaining unfinished. In 1884 Georgiana Burne-Jones wrote to Howard assuring him that '...your pictures take their turn with others and are not forgotten.'⁵⁵ In a second letter of a similar date, Burne-Jones himself reported that *Flodden* was indeed prospering:

Webb⁵⁶ has worked most days for the last month at it - and I go in every other day and ordain and obliterate.⁵⁷

He hastened to reassure Howard that it would be in its place at Naworth by Christmas. This, however, was not to be, although early in 1885 he reported that: 'Flodden begins to

⁵¹ Weeks was to execute other designs for relief work by Burne-Jones such as the 1888 version of *The Hesperides*. Rosalind Howard's account book records that Weeks was paid £30 for his work on *Flodden* during 1882.

⁵² Burne-Jones to Howard: 'I saw Flodden on Sunday last...now Crane is back I shall have it removed to Kensington.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁵³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁵⁴ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Matthew Webb, of whom Burne-Jones wrote to Howard: '...he is used to stucco work & has done a good deal from time to time for architects.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated. His involvement with *Flodden* is not to be confused with that of Philip Webb which extended only to designing the elements aforementioned and advising on their refinement once Boehm's cast had been made.

⁵⁷ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

look nice.’⁵⁸ He suggested that Howard now work at the panel with him; it required, in his words, ‘our master hands’,⁵⁹ the lion’s share of the remodelling thus far having been carried out by Weeks and Webb. However, Burne-Jones suffered an attack of shingles which left him weakened for several months. He wrote to Howard following his illness, averring that he was now reconciled to the probability that he would be unable to complete *Flodden* in the near future. The decision was taken to send it to Naworth unfinished. He added that it appeared ‘a funny childish thing but surely that was our earnest desire, wasn’t it?’,⁶⁰ tacitly acknowledging that it owed its inspiration to nostalgic indulgence. The two were never to work on it together as they had hoped.

Despite his expressions of satisfaction with the panel as it neared completion, Burne-Jones was concerned that Boehm would be less than enthusiastic if he were to see it again once it had been tinted. The process had shown up defects in the modelling: the surface was very uneven and pitted in places, and the serried spears behind the central mounted figure and those to the extreme left of the composition appear inappropriately thick and uncertainly executed beside their more slender counterparts. The bowmen are more prominent than those of either the original cartoon or Boehm’s mould, and the disposition of figures in the foreground is also significantly different (fig. 123).

When the panel was finally ready for transportation, Burne-Jones requested that Boehm recommend his usual man to pack and remove it, adding, with a typically exaggerated air of drama:

...but ask him so that he may not want to see it else I shall have another enemy in life and so will you. ⁶¹

He initially planned to complete the remaining faces and ornaments when next he visited Naworth⁶² but, worn down by his illness, he later wrote:

This is vile of me, but I am demoralised by overwork - half killed with so many

⁵⁸ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁵⁹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. January 15th 1885

⁶⁰ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁶¹ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁶² Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. 1884

things on my feeble mind...you will touch up Flodden in situ won't you - finishing the banners, tipping objects with beautiful touches. This you will do I am assured.⁶³

Howard did complete tinting the panel himself, but to what extent the colouring as it now appears is due to him, must remain uncertain. The choice of colours was his, however. The vivid gilded sunset, contrasting so strangely in its luminescence with the verdure of the summer hills which constitute the skyline, accords well with the Etruscan predilection for landscape imbued with the peculiarly atmospheric qualities of dawn and dusk.

Burne-Jones advised that a copy of the panel be made 'in case of accidents'. This cast (Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle) (fig. 124), taken by Matthew Webb direct from Boehm's clay mould, provides an invaluable comparison with the Naworth version.⁶⁴ It is more pedestrian and schematically far less dramatic, lacking as it does the cartoon's decorative clarity and elegance of line in favour of a more vigorous homogeneity. Boehm had sought to distinguish between the combatants by detailing both facial expression and type; such detail was effaced by Burne-Jones to be replaced with an indistinguishable generic type suggestive of the anonymity of war, and in which individuality was rendered subservient to the dynamics of the design.

Much of Naworth Castle was redecorated during the early 1880s, and it is evident that the Howards opted to sideline tradition⁶⁵ and fill their interiors with contemporary furnishings and design, purchased principally from Morris & Company and, to a lesser extent, Liberty's. The walls were adorned with Morris papers, Morris designs were used for the majority of the curtains and upholstery, fireplaces were re-tiled with de Morgan lustre tiles and copious amounts of new furniture was acquired. Ornamental wares included metalwork designed by W.A.S. Benson, glassware by James Powell of Whitefriars, and ceramics by de Morgan, the Martin Brothers and Dunmore.

⁶³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/27. Undated

⁶⁴ It was gilded and donated to Carlisle City Art Gallery and Museum by Howard in 1889. CALMG 1898.114.

⁶⁵ The same approach was repeated at Castle Howard, with the long gallery being redecorated in 1885 in Morris & Company's red Sunflower paper, for which 177 rolls were required.

Carpeting was required for the library, and naturally it was Morris to whom Howard turned. Carpet production was a new branch of Morris & Company's activities in 1881 when he placed the commission; not until the following year did Morris announce the first exhibition of carpets by the Firm and enter their design and production onto the company's prospectus. Morris's initial research into traditional carpet-weaving methods had begun in 1877 and, having assimilated sufficient technical know-how with characteristic avidity, by 1878 he had produced his first hand-knotted rugs on a frame which had been set up at Queen Square. Howard, ever-supportive of Morris's forays into the experimental, had purchased all three.⁶⁶ New clients were unlikely to risk large sums on commissioning products in a medium which was commercially untried, and it often fell to stalwarts such as Howard and Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell to commission early examples. Howard's level of involvement with Morris's mania for carpets, a preoccupation bewailed by Janey Morris,⁶⁷ was significant from the earliest stages. It was indicative of his value not merely as a client, but also as an active contributor to the developmental stages of research and production. In succeeding years Howard took pains to gather reference material for Morris, even going so far as to procure photographic reproductions of carpet designs from the East.⁶⁸

In February 1881 Morris prepared three designs for the Naworth carpet; the one selected by Howard had a broad border incorporating a heraldic motto and a central motif of a vase of flowers. Morris drew the entire design on point-paper himself, a process which took him an entire month. Measuring over thirty-one feet by fifteen feet, the Vase of Flowers carpet engendered technical complications, and Morris confessed to

⁶⁶ Castle Howard Archive, J23/105/12. Rosalind Howard's account book records payment of £10 for one and £6 15 shillings each for the other two. Howard also purchased the first piece of tapestry made by Morris, for £25-0-0 (Castle Howard Archive, J22/105/15, 1883)

⁶⁷ Having holidayed in Italy with Howard over the winter of 1877/8, the Morris family made their way back to England via Paris, where Janey recalled that 'we had...a dreary day...going in a cab to different curiosity shops, finding many carpets full of holes, but fortunately buying none.' Jane Morris to Rosalind Howard. Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. Undated. Spring 1878

⁶⁸ Morris wrote to Howard on receipt of one such consignment: 'Many thanks for the photos of carpets...They are very beautiful carpets and the designs will be very useful to me.' Castle Howard Archive, J22/55. July 27th 1892

'huffing and blowing over it rather'.⁶⁹ On its completion he wrote to Howard, declaring that 'it looks very well, I think...it weighs about a ton I fancy.'⁷⁰ The carpet was complemented by Windrush chintz curtains.⁷¹

Though destined never to display its proposed crowning glory, *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, the library at Naworth was nevertheless an interior of great distinction, and in his characteristically unobtrusive way Howard had been an active collaborator in its creation.

⁶⁹ MacCarthy, William Morris, p.337. Source uncited.

⁷⁰ Philip Henderson (ed.), *The Letters of William Morris*, p.153. The carpet's whereabouts are currently unknown.

⁷¹ Castle Howard Archive, J23/105/17: 'Morris: 70 yds windrush chintz for library £10-9-3'
(195)

Conclusion

Until his death in 1911 Howard had remained, as he had begun, 'one of the dearest people in the world' to his sister-in-law Blanche Airlie.¹ Wilfred Scawen Blunt remembered him as 'one of the best of men'. In his youth he had made a striking impression on both Burne-Jones and Costa, welcomed into the lives and studios of both without apparent hesitation. Indeed, Rosalind Howard was to observe 'how he fascinates everyone.'² Howard evidently possessed a measure of charisma.

Inherent to his charm was a quality recognised by Charles Kingsley and George Eliot, amongst others: an other-worldliness which ill fitted him for the life of an aristocratic landowner and politician. He was a man at odds with his station in life. Combined with his 'chivalric' characteristics, and central to his personality, was his integrity. One might say that it was the former characteristic, with its attendant naivety, which led him to preserve the latter so uncompromisingly that it dictated the entire course of his life.

George Howard was an artist. On first meeting Giovanni Costa in Rome, it was thus that he described himself, omitting to mention his lofty social standing. It was as an artist that he sought validation, through the long-term exhibition of his work. However, his repeated efforts at self-determination and his own emphatic self-categorisation proved insufficient both to many of his contemporaries, and historically, in establishing his place in the profession on an equal footing with those who earned a living by their work.

If sales alone were to be the measure of success in establishing Howard as a professional artist, then he could be said to have manifestly succeeded at the outset of his career. The ready sales of *Emilia* and *Lady Airlie* are indicative of the commercial appeal of Howard's paintings in the open marketplace. Neither was there any shortage of commissions for illustrative work after his first contribution to the *People's Magazine* in 1871. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that had

¹ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.167. Source uncited

² Castle Howard Archive, J22/102/14. January 19th 1868

he continued in the same vein it is likely that his work would have generated sufficient income upon which to support himself, had his material circumstances made it necessary for him to do so. Thus he might justifiably have laid claim to the status of professional as defined by the criterion of commercial worth. Given his social position, that Howard should have chosen to place his work in the open marketplace at all is indicative of his earnest desire to establish a reputation beyond the realm of the amateur. It was unfortunate that having done so, he undermined his claims to professional parity by disposing of the proceeds as he did.

Despite Howard's repeated crises in confidence and the succession of different artistic directions in which they sent him, these early years underpinned his determination not to abandon his chosen career. Despite the ambivalence that surfaced regularly throughout his life in relation to his achievements, his tenacity was such that it drove him to obviate ancestral responsibilities and expose himself to the censure of his wife's ultimate loss of faith in him. Throughout his career, Howard remained heavily reliant upon the affirmation of others. For many years it was principally to Rosalind that he turned for this, but as her faith in his potential achievements waned, he increasingly sought the encouragement of fellow-artists, placing himself at the heart of a band of painters whose ideals mirrored his own.

Howard's alignment with Giovanni Costa from the mid-1870s sent him in a very different direction from the course upon which he had been set by either Burne-Jones or Legros, and one which would make it challenging to establish a public profile as an artist. Once established with Costa, Howard remained faithful to his teachings and mentorship until Costa's death in 1903, never seeking to go beyond his orbit or to establish himself as an independent figure. As late as 1886 he continued to assimilate Costa's advice without question or frustration. He appears to have been content to remain cast in the role of disciple. Although Costa was indisputably 'an artist's artist', and critically well-received in England, that his work was limited in its appeal to a wider audience was a fact readily acknowledged by Howard, who stated that Costa 'painted for the few...& the consequence is that it is still the few who

appreciate his work.’³ Inevitably, therefore, the same could be said of the work of the Etruscan School as a whole. This limitation in popular appeal perhaps lay in the fact that their paintings, which were usually relatively small in scale and relied fundamentally upon the strength of their draughtsmanship for their effect, often appeared frankly modest to those unfamiliar with the precepts informing their construction and execution. The aim of all Etruscan painters was truth and harmony through sentiment, and this in itself was sometimes apt to appear as tameness to the uninitiated, as the *Magazine of Art’s* review of Costa’s show at the Fine Art Society in 1882 bears witness. Perhaps it is not surprising that the Etruscan School, overshadowed in its day by other, ‘shopper’ movements in art, has since largely faded from the forefront of the art-historical consciousness.

Howard’s mature technique evolved slowly, over many years. During the second half of the 1870s he executed a number of paintings notable for their almost documentary quality. The figure content of these paintings, which focused largely on facets of Italian rural life, was for the most part more prominent than would be the case during the succeeding decade. At times, however, Howard tended to depict a rather idealised version of rural life, and his palette (particularly in the figures) was somewhat sugary. From the early 1880s, however, Howard’s landscapes increased in atmosphere and intensity, many of them being characterised by a lyrical melancholy. His handling of oil paint, a medium with which he did not have a natural affinity, became more assured, and he moved away from the literalness of tone which had marred the mood of much of his work hitherto.

Howard was never destined to be an exceptional artist - this is implicit in several primary sources. In her journal, for example, Rosalind Howard recorded several instances of being advised against expecting attainments from Howard that were beyond his power to deliver. Had his artistic connections been less exalted, Rosalind’s ambitions on behalf of her husband may have assumed a more modest complexion, but many of Howard’s closest friends and associates were amongst the foremost painters of the day. Direct comparison with the likes of Burne-Jones and

³ Castle Howard Archive, J22/36. Howard to Signor Guerazzi, April 3rd 1903

Legros inevitably found Howard wanting, but he was, in truth, a highly competent artist. Correspondence and family papers attest to the fact that his ability as a painter was often commented upon very favourably by both laymen and fellow painters, who recognised him as a painter of worth. Within this context, he succeeded in carving a niche for himself as an artist well respected by his peers.

Howard left behind a multitude of drawings and paintings, many of which would be consigned to obscurity or become unattributable because of his practice of leaving them largely unsigned. A few of his works would find their way into the nation's collections to be displayed, on occasion, alongside those by his contemporaries and associates. This, one feels, would perhaps have been recognition enough to an artist who never overestimated his own talents.

Of equal satisfaction to Howard would have been the role he had played in contributing to the careers of many of his associates. His benign influence was felt by many of those with whom he came into contact during his lifetime; Lady Paget recalled that he was 'a generous and intelligent friend to those whom he thought real artists.'⁴ Howard's role went far beyond that of patron, for more often than not, his relationship with those concerned was mingled with friendship. Howard was sometime facilitator, promoter and ballast.

On a broader level, Howard's concerns lay principally with architectural preservation, the amelioration of art in education and design reform. His daughter Dorothy was to write that: 'culture was the most pervading thing about my father'.⁵ Fittingly, Howard expressed in his will his wish that the National Gallery should make a selection from the Castle Howard picture collection, to be presented to the nation as a gift. Amongst the chosen works there were two by Rubens, one Gainsborough and *Le Repos des Pauvres* by Legros. Various other paintings from the Howard collections, amongst them Bellini's *Circumcision*, had already made their way to the National Gallery as gifts from Howard during his latter years. Following his death, the Board of Trustees paid tribute to Howard's long-standing

⁴ Surtees, *The Artist and the Autocrat*, p.107. Source uncited.

⁵ Henley, *Rosalind Howard*, p.143

dedication as a trustee and tireless work on the gallery's behalf.

Perhaps above all, however, Howard valued the loving friendship of his peers and the mutual encouragement and inspiration, which never failed him, in a life latterly blighted by domestic dispute and coloured throughout with the unease of social displacement. He was, in Stopford Brooke's words, 'a man of many parts...a free spirit, and...a "universal person"'.⁶

⁶ Jacks, *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, p.249

Chronology

Abbreviated names appear in the following forms:

EBJ: Edward Burne-Jones

AL: Alphonse Legros

GC: Giovanni Costa

WM: William Morris

GH: George Howard

DGR: Dante Gabriel Rossetti

RH: Rosalind Howard

PW: Philip Webb

1826 Birth of GC.

1831 Birth of PW.

1833 Birth of EBJ.

1834 Birth of WM.

1837 Birth of AL.

Accession of Queen Victoria

1843 Birth of GH.

1857 GH visits Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester.

1859 Blanche Airlie acquires Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, and forges links with the Little

Holland House circle and Frederic Leighton.

1861 *Establishment of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company*

1862 GH enrolls at Trinity College, Cambridge. Visits International Exhibition.

1863 GH and RH meet.

Gains introductions to Watts, Millais and Leighton.

1864 Engagement & marriage to RH, and subsequent move to London.

EBJ elected to Old Watercolour Society.

1865 *Dudley Gallery opens*

GH gains introduction to Henry Cole and obtains permission to sketch at South Kensington Museum.

Introduction to EBJ; commences studies with him.

Enrolls at South Kensington School of Design.

Takes his first lessons in oils from Hamilton Wild.

1865/6 Winters in Italy. Meets GC. Annual trips to Italy ensue.

1866 Enrolls at Heatherley's and prepares to enter RA Schools. His submission is rejected.

Search for a London house begins, and GH meets PW.

EBJ meets Maria Zambaco.

November: EBJ introduces GH to AL, and he commences studying with him.

- 1867 Commissions PW to design 1 Palace Green, Kensington. Prolonged discussions over the design ensue with Crown Commissioners.
Exhibits first work, at the Dudley Gallery.
- 1868 First picture sale; Charles Augustus Howell acts as GH's agent.
Visits Antwerp on AL's recommendation. Visit curtailed by the death of GH's grandfather.
June: building commences at Palace Green.
Leighton at Naworth.
Crisis of confidence sets in; begins etching & illustrative work.
- 1869 Fails to complete any paintings.
Jenny and May Morris at Naworth Castle whilst parents stay at Bad Ems.
EBJ's relationship with Maria Zambaco becomes more widely known.
- 1870 Rift with Charles Augustus Howell and DGR.
Palace Green completed.
- 1871 EBJ resigns from OWS following criticisms of *Phyllis & Demophoon*.
GH commissions Cupid & Psyche frieze from EBJ for dining room at Palace Green.
WM at Naworth.
- 1872 Executes illustrative designs for *People's Magazine*.
- 1873 Further illustrative designs for *People's Magazine*.
WM and EBJ at Naworth.
- 1874 PW engaged on various projects at Naworth Castle and Brampton in Cumbria.
GH gains PW the commission to design St Martin's Parish Church in Brampton.
Prolonged period of planning ensues.
Summer: EBJ recuperates at Naworth following his ill-health after completing *The Beguiling of Merlin*
WM at Naworth.
- 1875 Reconstitution of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company into Morris & Co.
GC forms the Gold Club.
- 1875-8 WC works on bringing panels for Cupid & Psyche frieze to completion.
- 1876 GH founds Eastern Question Association with WM.
Founder member of Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.
Commissions PW to build Four Gables at Brampton for agent of Naworth estate.
- 1877 *Morris & Co* leases premises at 264 Oxford Street.
Spring: WM visits Venice with GH.
May: *Grosvenor Gallery* opens; GH invited to exhibit, becoming a regular exhibitor at the gallery thereafter.
Lays foundation stone of St Martin's Church

- Commissions PW to build Green Lane House for vicar at Brampton, Reverend Whitehead.
- 1878 Winter 1877 / spring 1878: Jane, May and Jenny Morris join the Howards at Oneglia on the Italian Riviera.
GC forms Circolo degli Artisti Italiani following Italian artists' poor showing at Paris Universal Exhibition.
St Martin's in Brampton is consecrated.
GC visits Naworth.
Whistler v Ruskin libel case
- 1879 Death of Charles Howard; GH's income increases significantly.
Elected MP for East Cumberland, unopposed.
Summer: Jane, May and Jenny Morris at Naworth. WM joins them in September. Arthur Hughes and GC also there.
Rift with PW following his discovery of unauthorised building works at Naworth.
- 1880 Death of Lord Lanerton, GH's uncle..
Stands for Parliament again and is defeated.
Redecoration of Naworth commences; PW redesigns library.
Executes designs for illustrations for J.A. Froude's *Life of Carlyle*.
Visits Egypt and Palestine for the first time.
- 1881 January: Jane Morris joins the Howards at Bordighera on the Italian Riviera.
February: Returns to England to fight in General Election. Re-elected as MP for East Cumberland.
Howard commissions EBJ to paint *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon* for library at Naworth.
Commissions Morris & Co. to execute the commemorative East Window at St Martin's, to be dedicated to Charles Howard. EBJ designs sixteen new figures for it.
GH becomes member of Board of Trustees of National Gallery (remained for 30 years, later becoming Chairman).
Death of DGR.
- 1882 Commissions *Battle of Flodden Field* bas relief from EBJ.
Cupid & Psyche frieze revised & completed by EBJ.
August: GC at Castle Howard.
- 1883 Winter 1882/3: Etruscan School formalised, with GC at its head.
Morrises and Palgrave at Naworth.
- 1884 *Formation of Art Workers' Guild.*
GC at Castle Howard.
- 1885 GH relinquishes claims to *Arthur in Avalon*.

- EBJ elected ARA.
 Cumberland constituency reconstituted from East Cumberland with two members to North Cumberland with one. GH refuses stand for re-election and joins the Liberal Unionists.
 Visits Switzerland.
- 1886 *Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill.*
Formation of New English Art Club.
 January: GC at Castle Howard and Palace Green.
 December: GC at Castle Howard.
- 1888 January/February visits Egypt.
 March in Italy with GC.
New Gallery opens. GH a regular exhibitor.
 Management of estates handed over to RH.
- 1889 Death of eighth Earl of Carlisle. GH succeeds to title.
- 1890 Grosvenor Gallery closes.
- 1895 Visits West Indies & India. Subsequently visits India several times to visit son
- 1896 Death of WM.
- 1898 Death of EBJ.
- 1900 Webb retires to Caxtons near Worth.
- 1903 Death of GC.
 GH organises Costa memorial exhibition with Walter James, Edith Corbet and Costa's widow.
- 1904 Visits Egypt.
- 1906 Tower of St Martin's church finally completed to Webb's design. George Jack oversees works.
- 1910 Death of PW.
- 1911 Death of GH and AL.
 RH sells Palace Green.
- 1921 Death of RH.



Fig. 1.

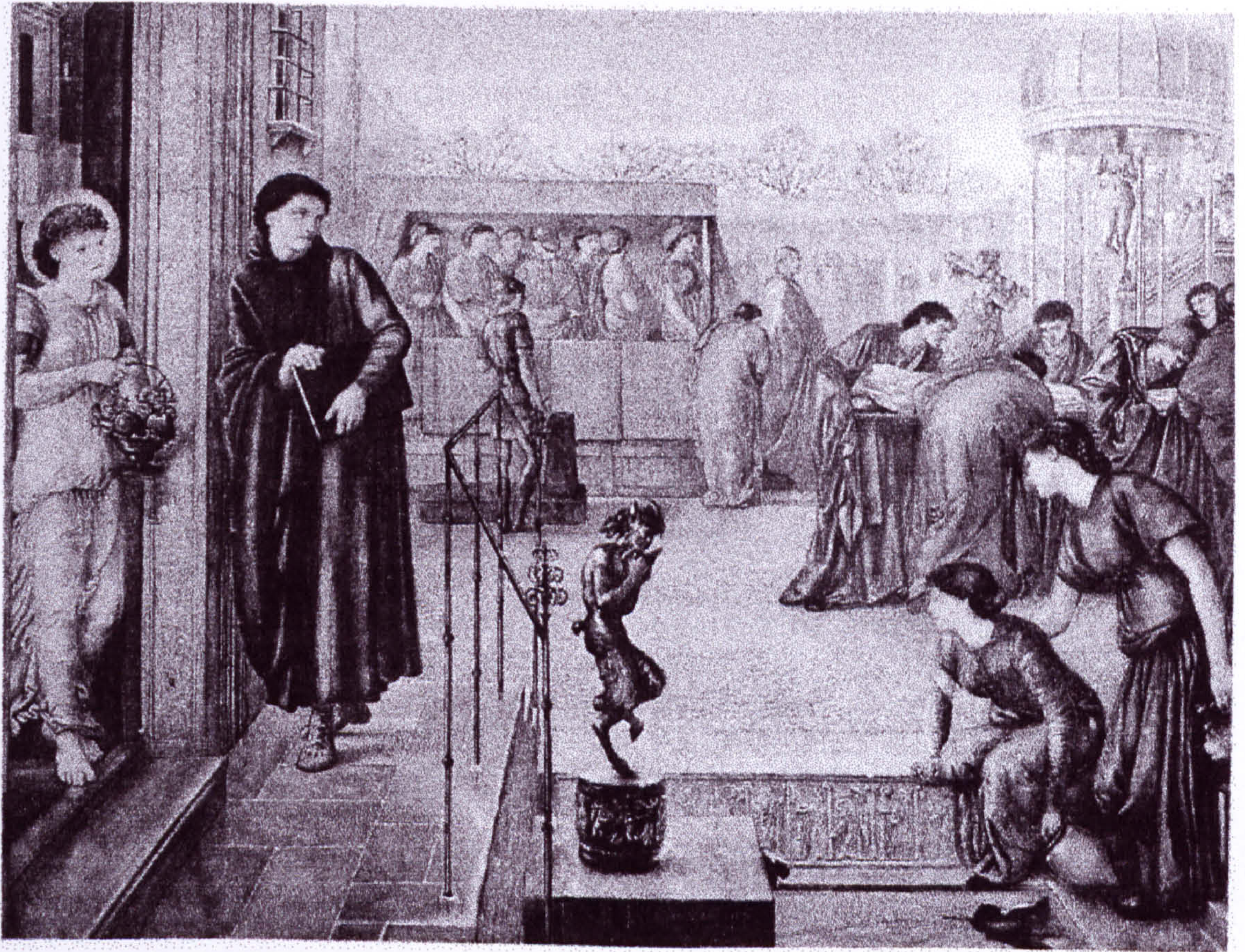


Fig. 2.

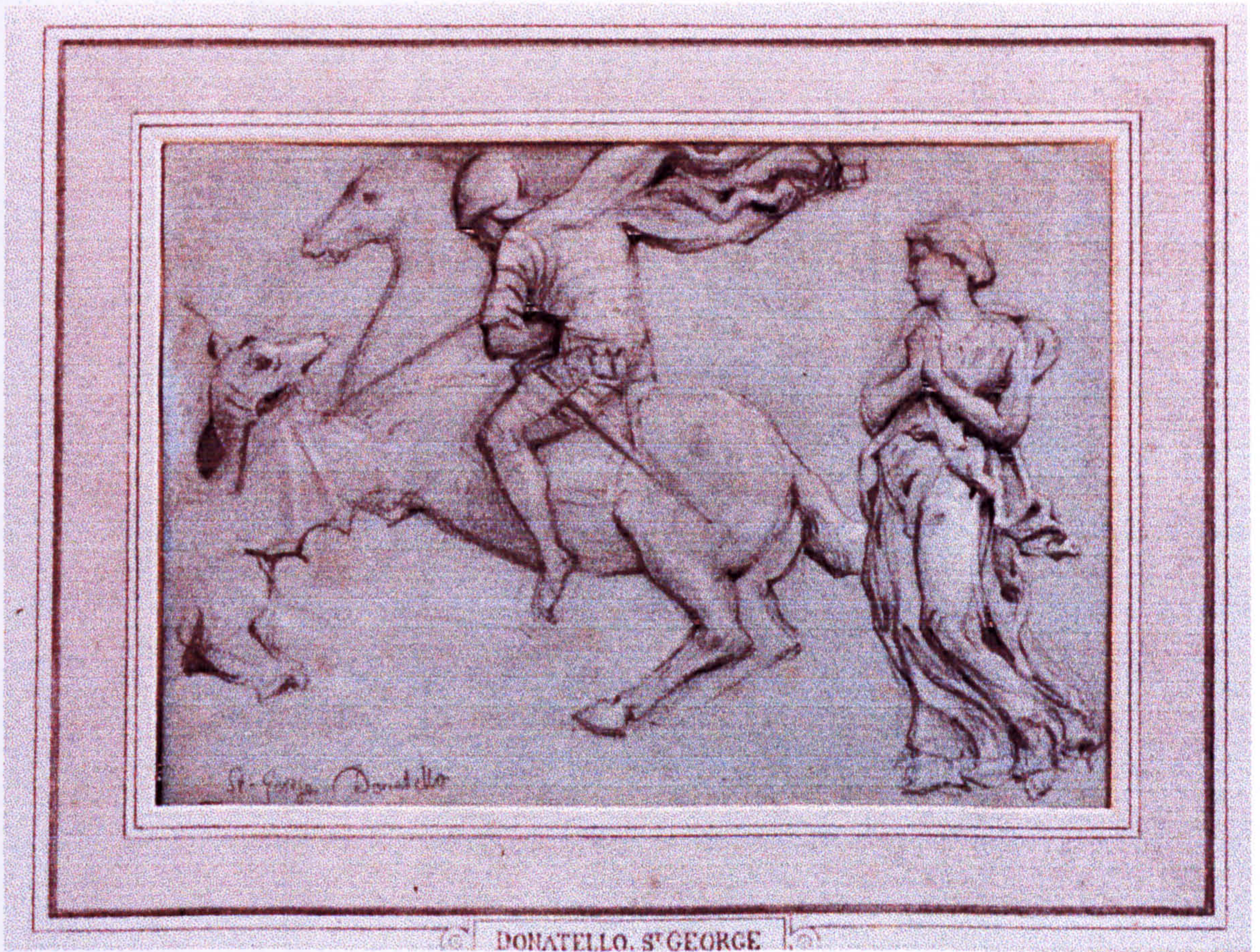


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

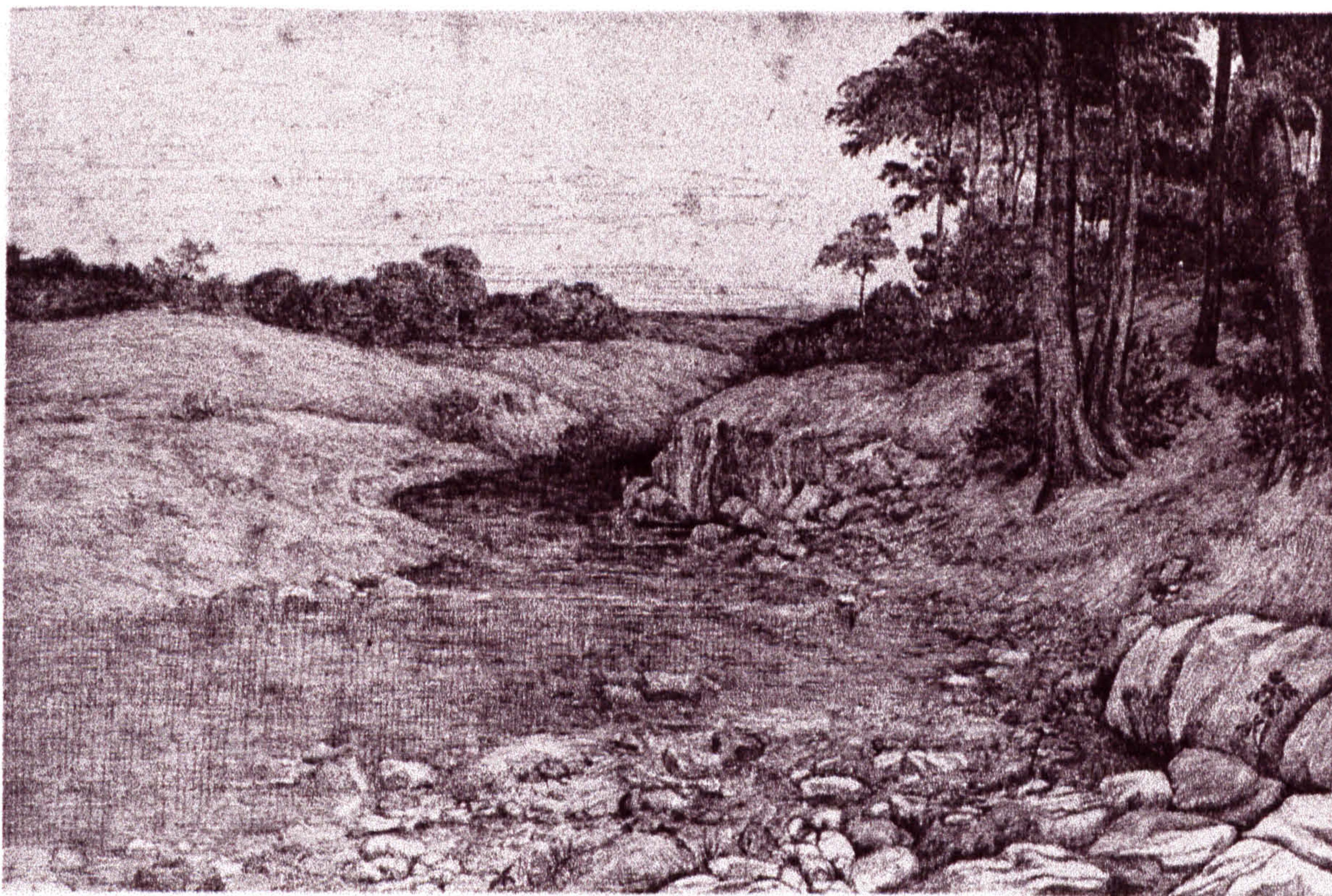


Fig. 12.

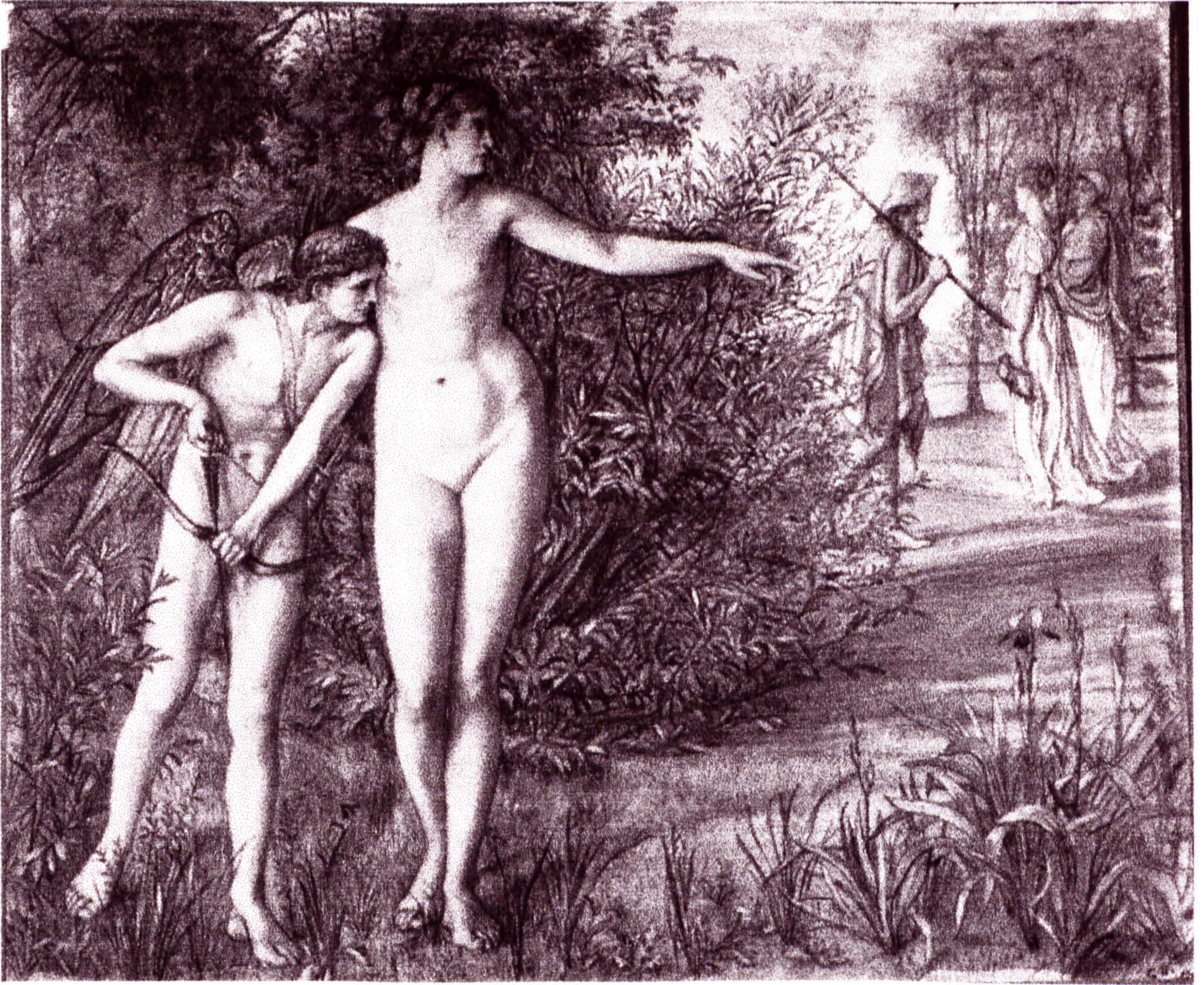


Fig. 13.

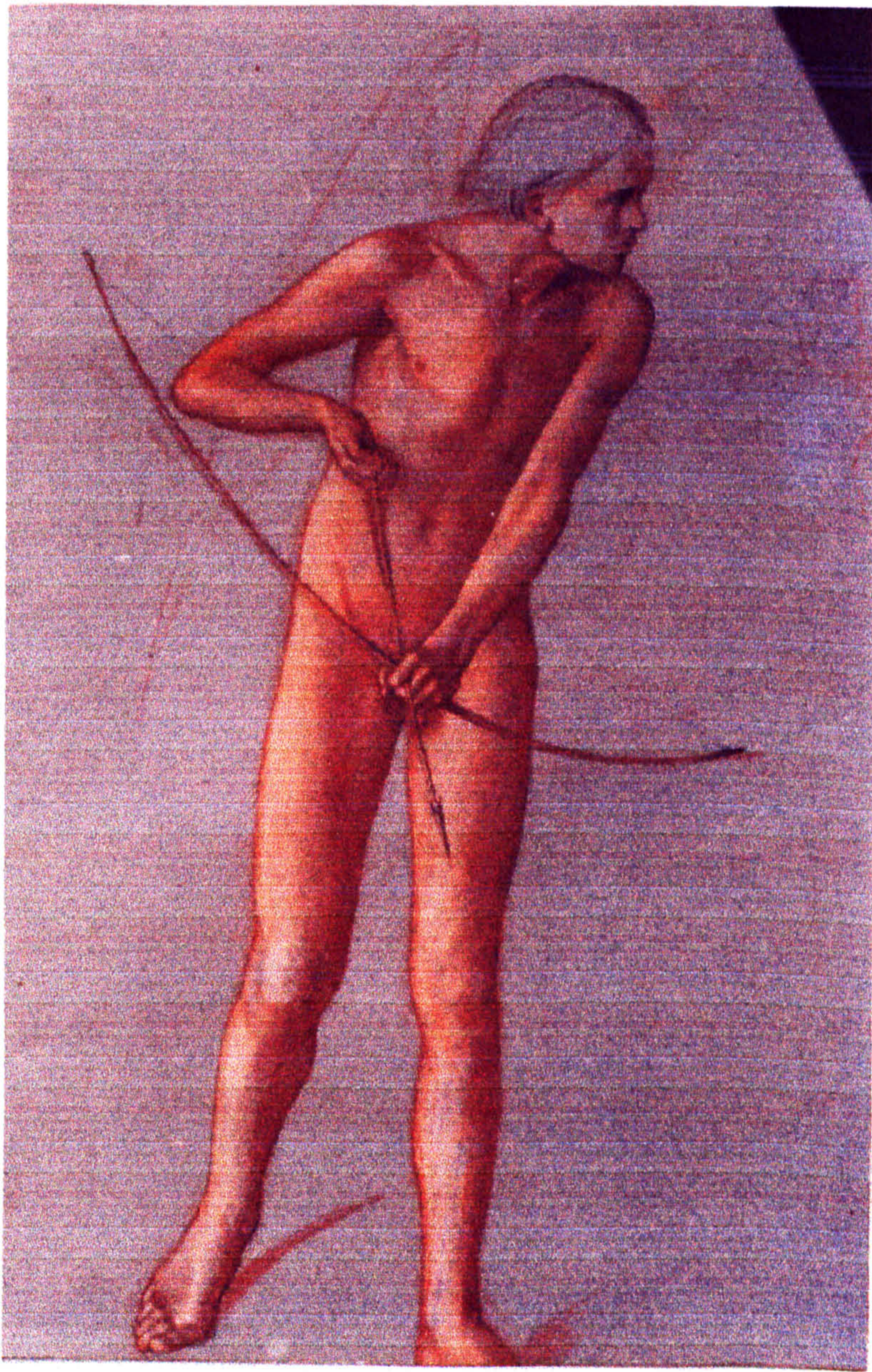


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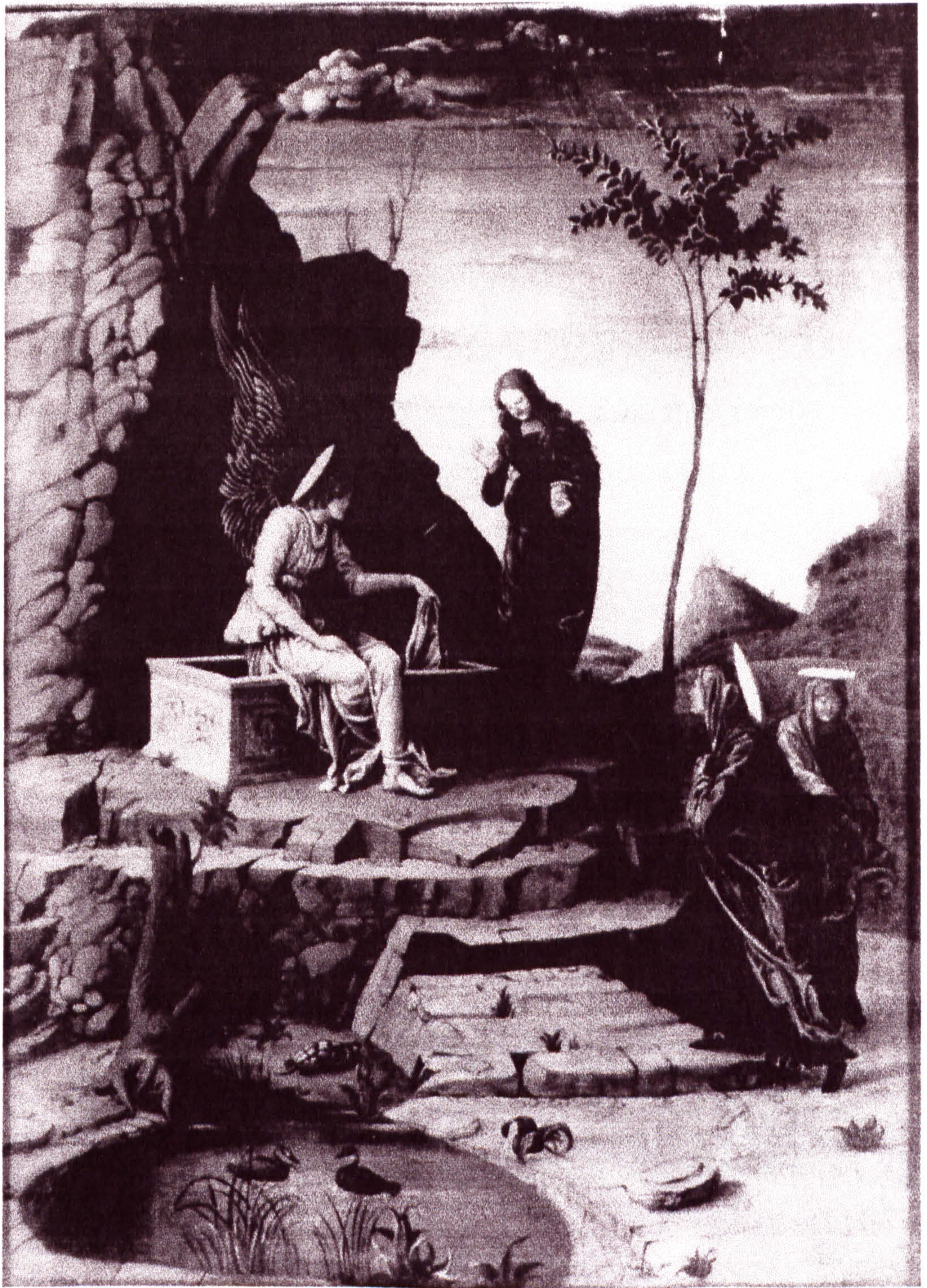


Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.



Fig. 19.



Fig. 20.



Fig. 21



Fig. 21a.



A FISHING SONG.

BY H. MONTGOMERY HANKING.

Illustrated by A. BACKUSHELL COFF.

The sea is a mackerel colour:

Out with the boat,

Row her, or sail her, or scull her,

Get her afloat.

Out by the bar she will catch the breeze

That chases her faster, the faster she flies.

There are cat's teeth on the water,

Poor troubled sea!

The vexing winds have caught her,

And none may free;

How she foams as she struggles and raves

With all her down-trodden complaining waves!

The wind grows lighter, falling

As sinks the sun;

Hurry! its voice is calling

To speed our run;

He who lets a breeze go past,

May lie in a calm while the fishings last.

The huts grow dim as sorrow

That's past and o'er:

Shall we see them again to-morrow,

Or never more?

Heaven above us, the sea below!

Bend your backs to the sweeps and row.



Fig. 22.

THE FOUR SEASONS.

BY H. RUTHERFORD RUSSELL.

Illustrated by ROBERT HAYMAN.



WINTER comes wildly in a whirl of snows !
Winds shriek and bluster and the sun is late ;
Branches are bare above, earth bare below,
The birds and streams are silent—let us wait.



SUMMER comes proudly with its rich array,
Perfumes abound, blossoms spread out their state,
We love the night, we revel in the day,
The glaring sunshine sickens—let us wait.



SPRING comes, the air is clear, the breeze is sweet,
All earth a festival doth celebrate !
Skies overhead grow blue, buds touch our feet ;
Showers splash the sprouting hedges—let us wait !



AUTUMN comes softly with a sense of loss,
The earth unrobes itself, our hopes abate ;
Dead leaves lie heap'd upon the dying moss,
What is there yet to look for ? let us wait !



Fig. 23.



HILL-SIDE SONNETS.

My life of late hath been as calm and still
As is some summer-lesser of mountain lake
That lies content to mirror sky and hill,
Not fain itself to send forth any rill.
The thirst of those who soul below to slake,
Till winds among the peaks begin to wake,
And sudden storms, or mists that cling and
broad,
Come, and beneath the beating of the rain
The turn swells up and floods its banks
again.
And gushing forth from that high solitude
Specks green and gladness down the
mountain-side,
Till all the people bless its fruitful tide,
Eased by its travel — so unrest hath cease,
And my soul sings, that long for peace was
dumb.

Too long the glass of heaven, ah, too long!
I being yet of earth: or almost seem'd
As heaven were come down, I almost
dream'd
Of rest on earth. All sense of pain and
wrong
Was drown'd in that blue ocean's circling
food,
Or lost in mazes of the hirschen-wood,
Or fallen from some precipice, or left
Behind me, sunk in some rocky cleft.
And I went up — and met the sun, and lay
Aloft in peace, and drank the perfect day:
And I went down — and met the perfect
night,
With sleepy Mies that wou'd to see delight:
Until a scourge-arm'd specter met my
sight,
That chased me back into this hard high-
way.

Is it so certain that my life was good
Because I rested, and forgot my pain?
How if my present toil bring future gain
To this great people? How if my heart's
blood
Give newer life to some poor famish'd one
Toiling and groaning underneath the sun,
Who only feels the summer noonday's heat,
Having no heart to know the summer sweet,
Who only shivers when the north wind blows,
Not recking of the strength that north
winds bring.
See Tophet in the heat, and shroud in
snow: —
Am I not paid? For those oppress'd with
woes
Useless in sunlight sleep: Bethesda's spring,
That heal'd, duck-applied by the angel's
wing.

H. MARSHMAN RINGROD.



Fig. 24.



Drawn by GEORGE HOWARD.]

THE LEGEND OF THE PAGAN PAINTER.

Fig. 25.



THE MIDNIGHT FUNERAL ACROSS THE RIVER.

Illustrated by GEORGE HOWARD.

I HEARD a mournful wailing for the dead,
 And o'er the river flickering rays were shed
 From waving torches; then the measured stroke
 Of oars that smote the waters and awoke
 The music of the ripple at the bows.
 I saw the swans turn with a startled gaze
 To view the light which glimmer'd through the haze,
 And draw together in a snowy group,
 To watch that sad and solemn funeral troop
 Passing across the slowly-flowing stream.
 Then rose a chanted dirge, in solemn swell,
 And mingled with the ripple; soft it fell
 Upon the listening ear; a lofty song
 Of Faith and Hope, borne by the breeze along,
 And wafted to the throne of Heavenly grace.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life,"
 Thus ran the strain; "though in the strife
 Of earth the faithful one should pass away,
 The night shall soon give place unto the day,
 And he shall live, shall live—and never die."
 And then I lost the words; but still the strain
 Came floating gently to me, and I fain
 Would follow, but the river ran between;
 And now a dim, faint light alone was seen
 From the receding torches fitfully.
 It faded, and the dirge was heard no more;
 And so I turn'd me from the dreary shore.
 The gray of morning rose upon the world,
 And dewy mist from every meadow curl'd,
 Forming white walls and heavy seeming waves.—C. H. H.

Fig. 26.



Fig. 27.

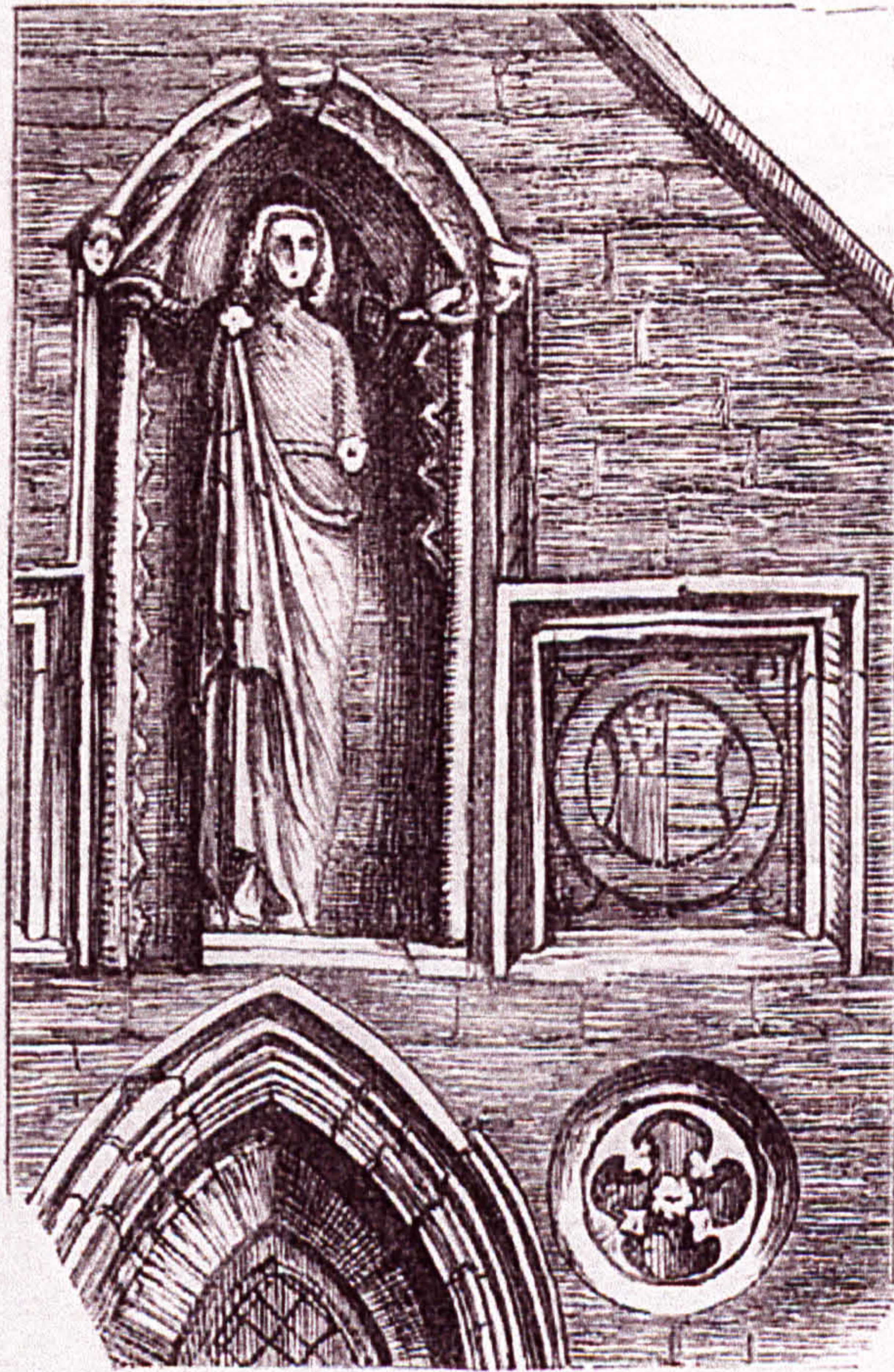


FIGURE OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE IN GABLE OF WEST FRONT.

Fig. 28



Fig. 29.

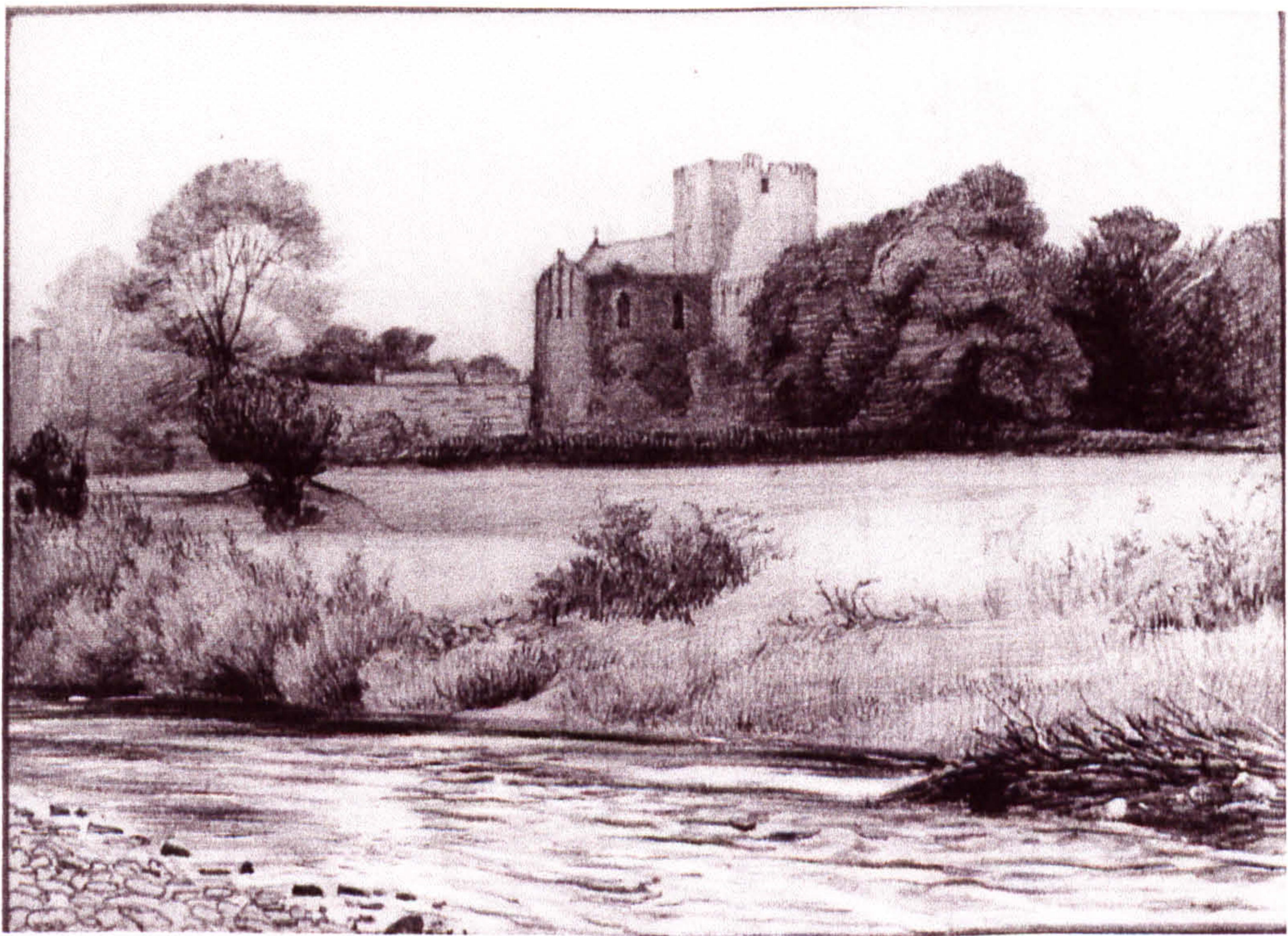


Fig. 30.



Fig. 31.

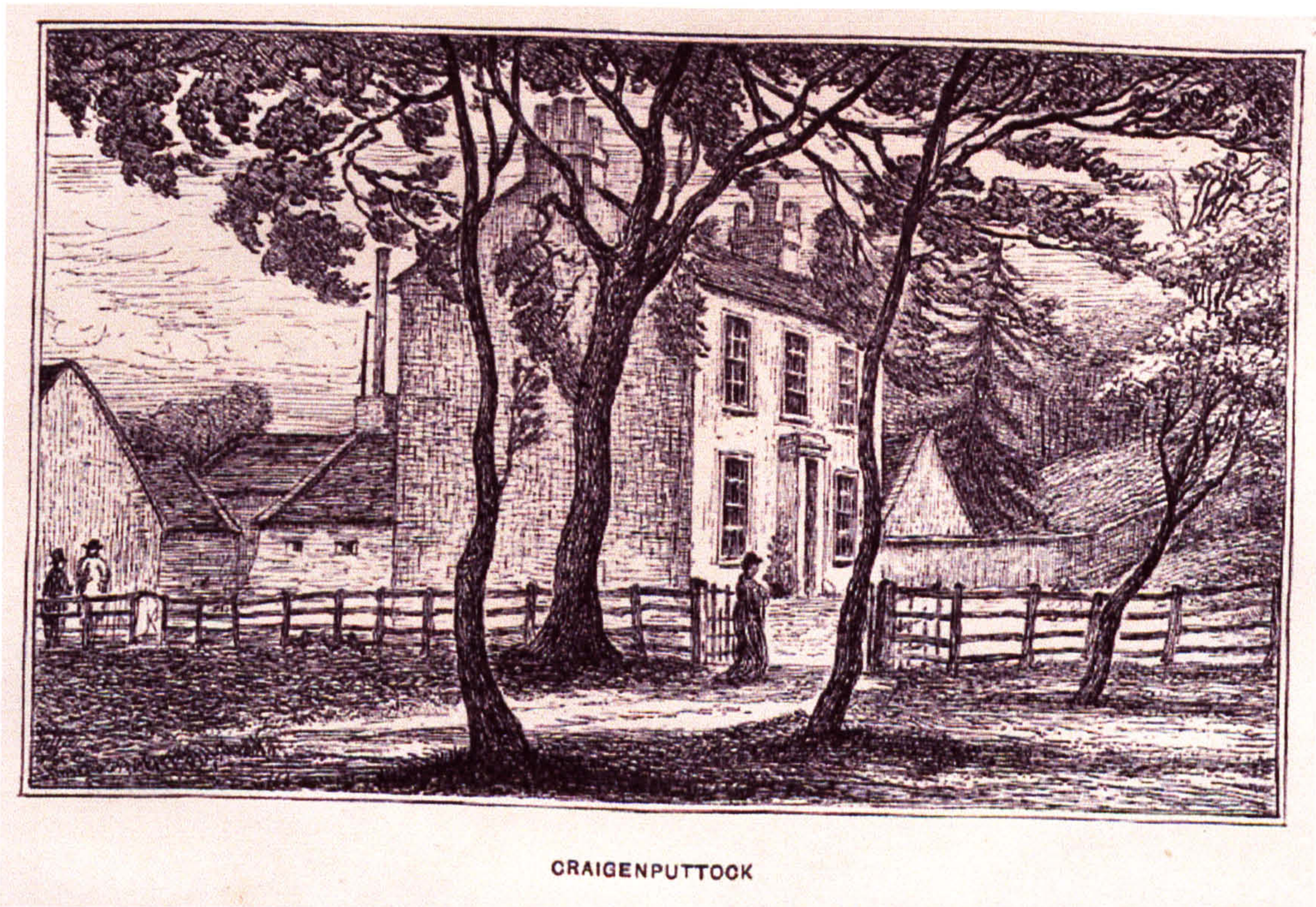


Fig. 32.



Fig. 33.



EGCLEFECHAN

Fig. 34.

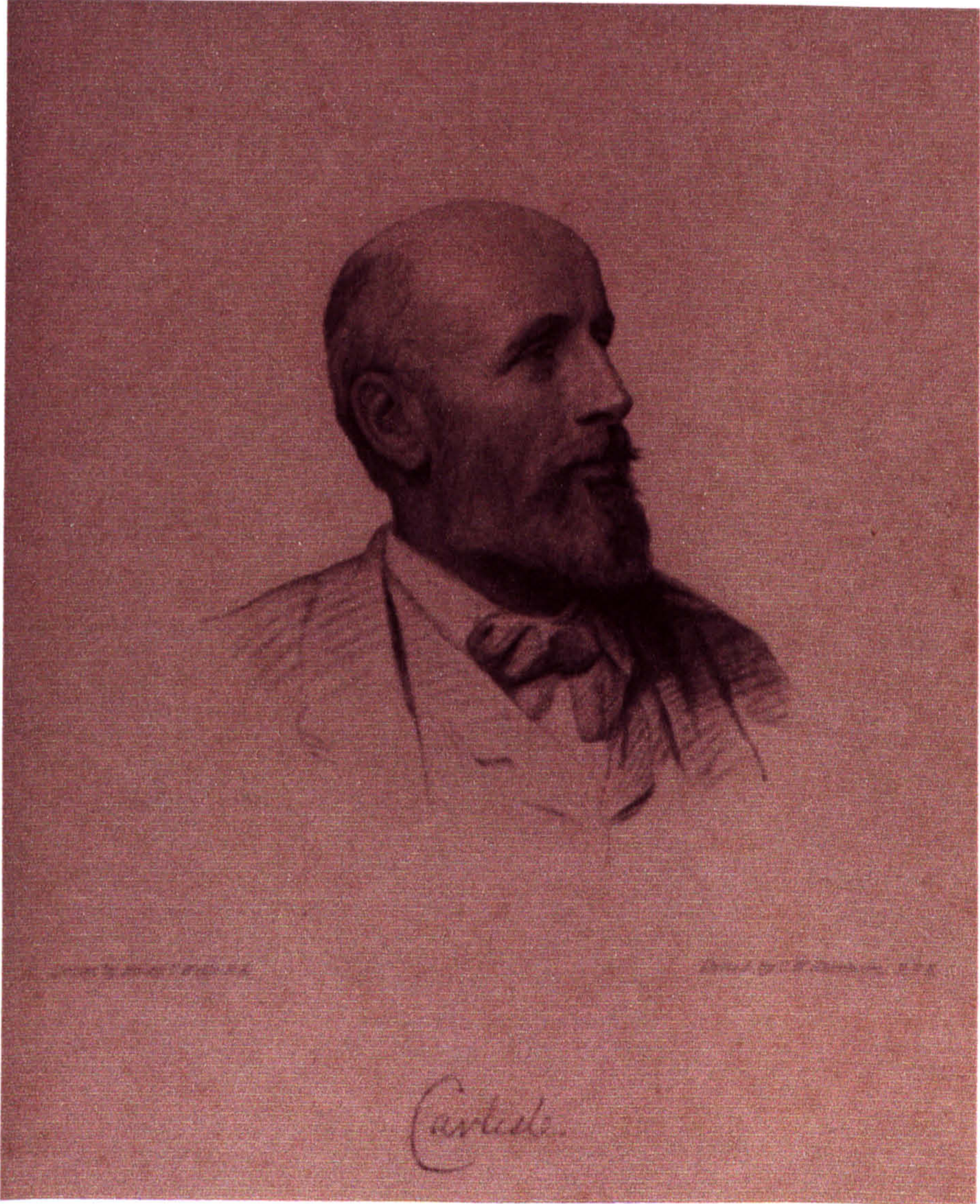
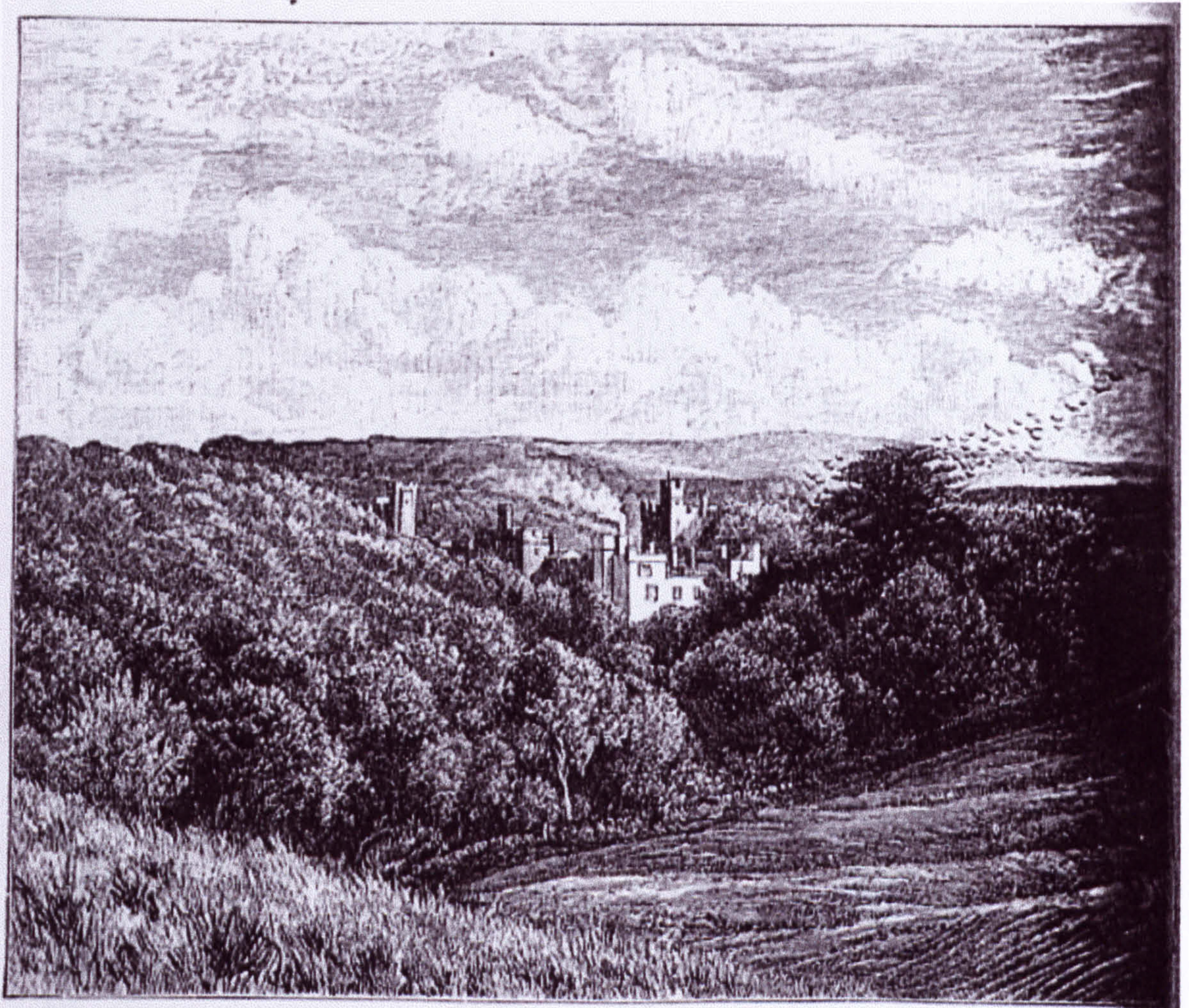
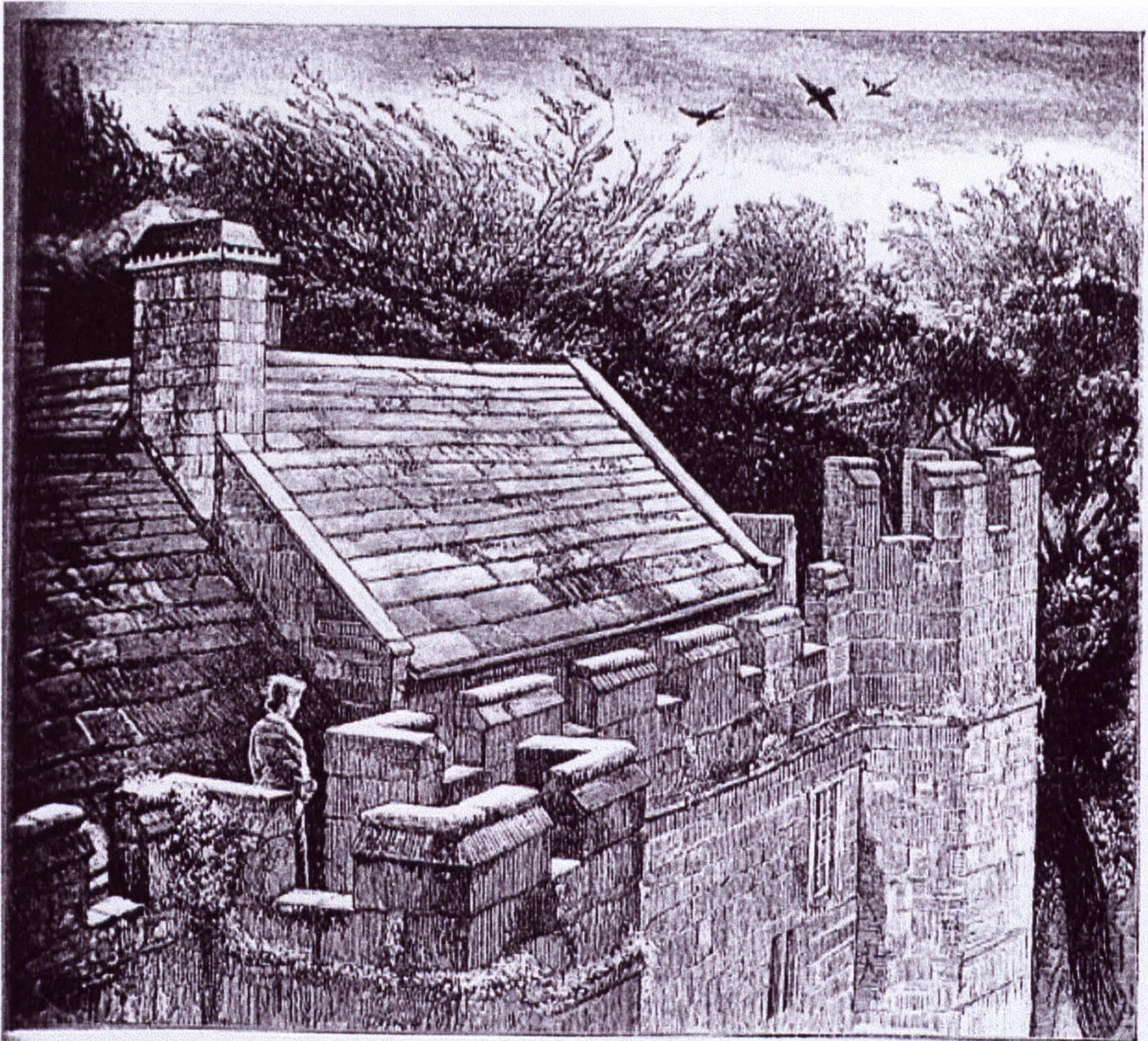


Fig. 35.



NAWORTH, FROM THE NORTH.
From a Drawing by GEORGE HOWARD.

Fig. 36.



THE BATTLEMENTS.
From a Drawing by GEORGE HOWARD.

Fig. 37.



Fig. 38.



Fig. 39.



Fig. 40.



Fig. 41.



Fig. 42

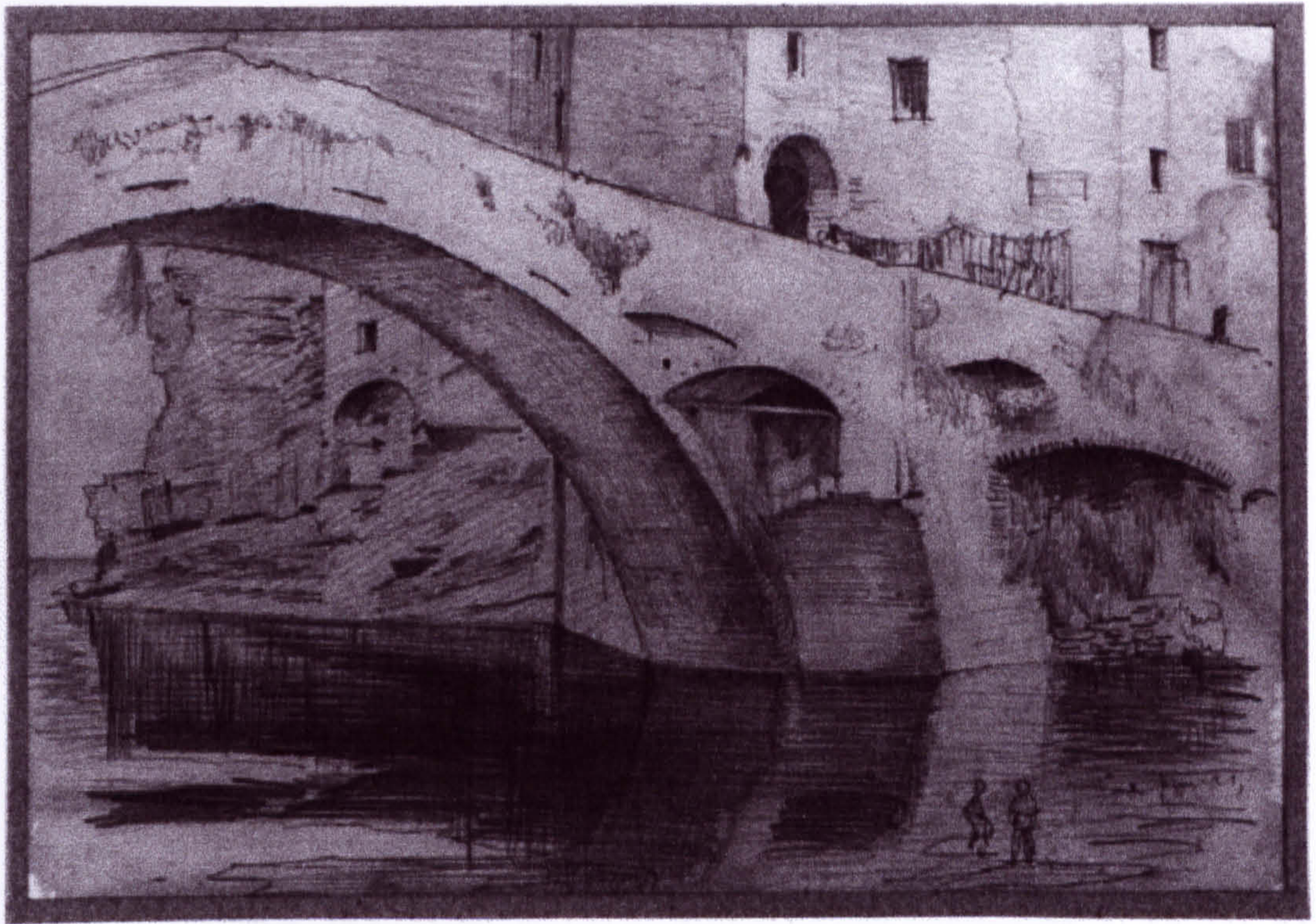


Fig. 43.



Fig. 44.



Fig. 45.



Fig. 45a.

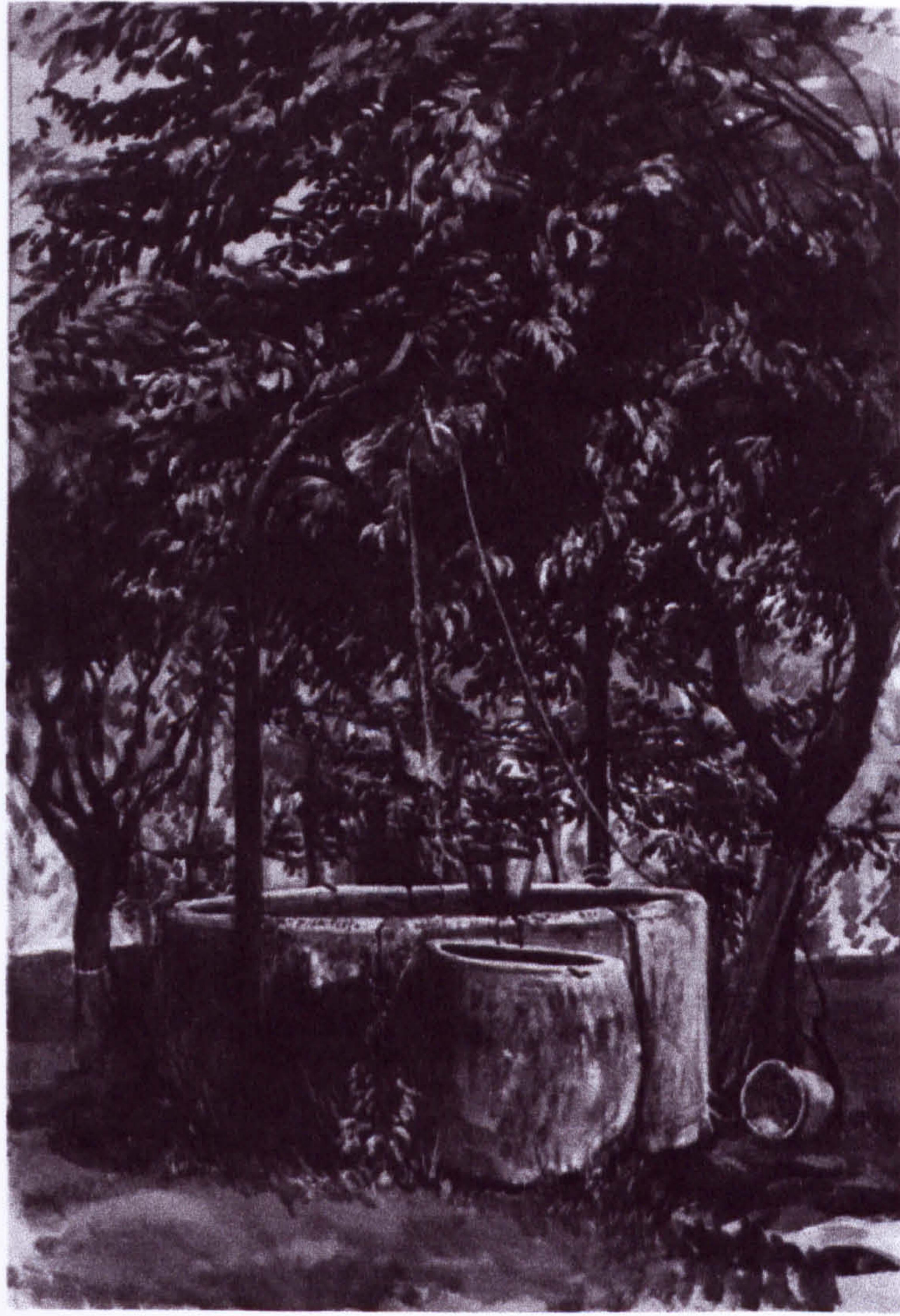


Fig. 46.

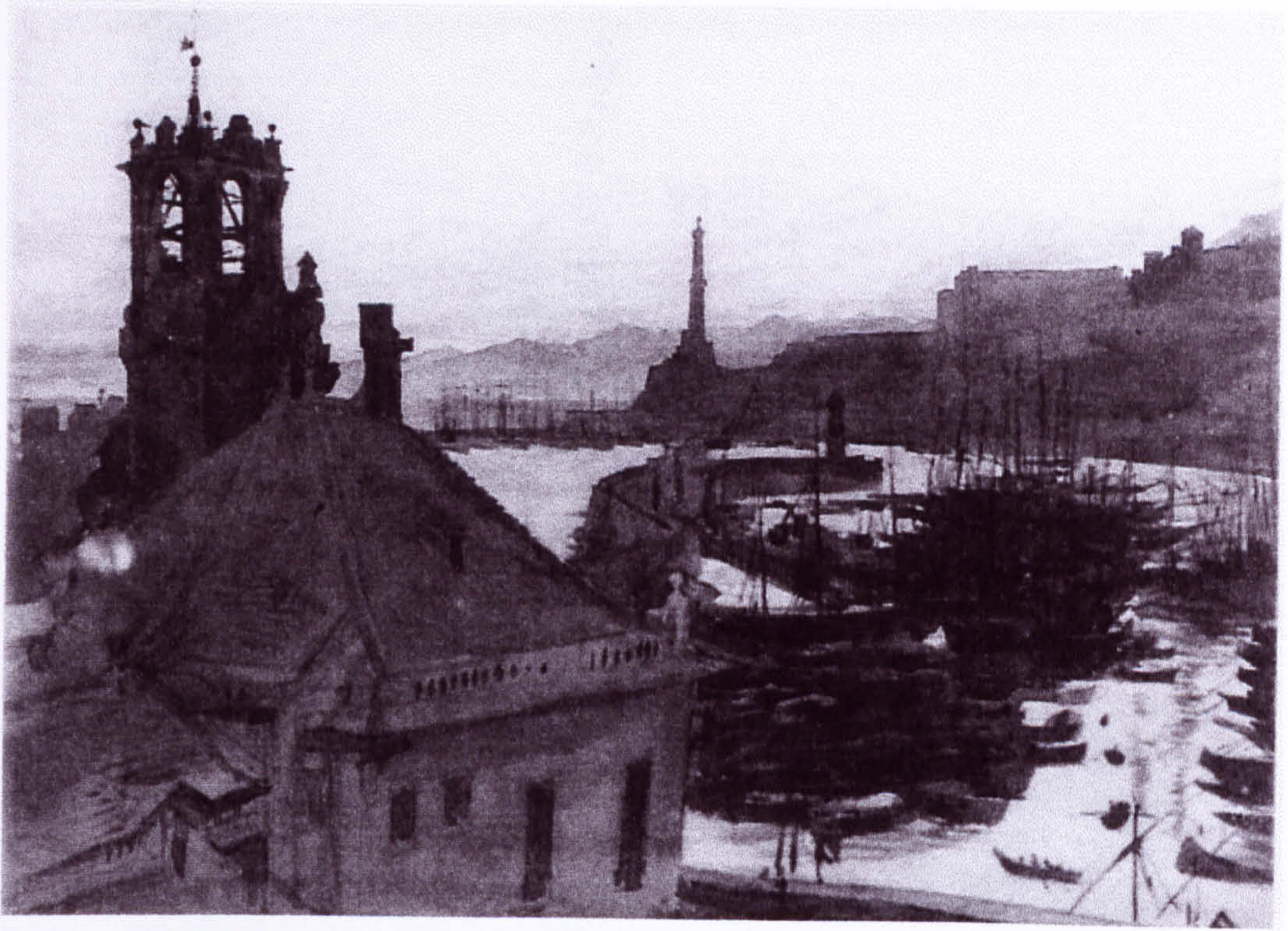


Fig. 47.



Fig. 47a.

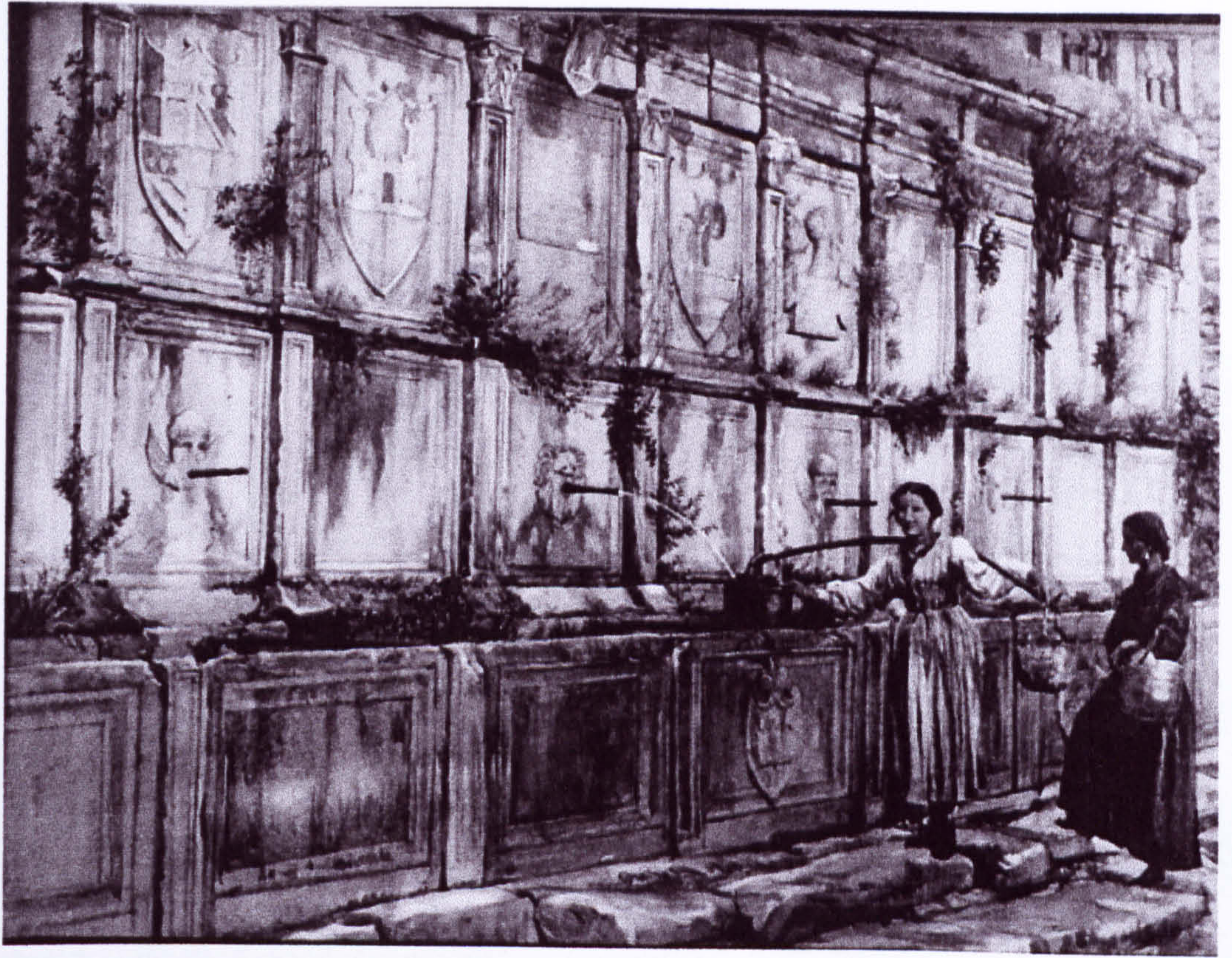


Fig. 48.



Fig. 49.



Fig. 50.



Fig. 51.

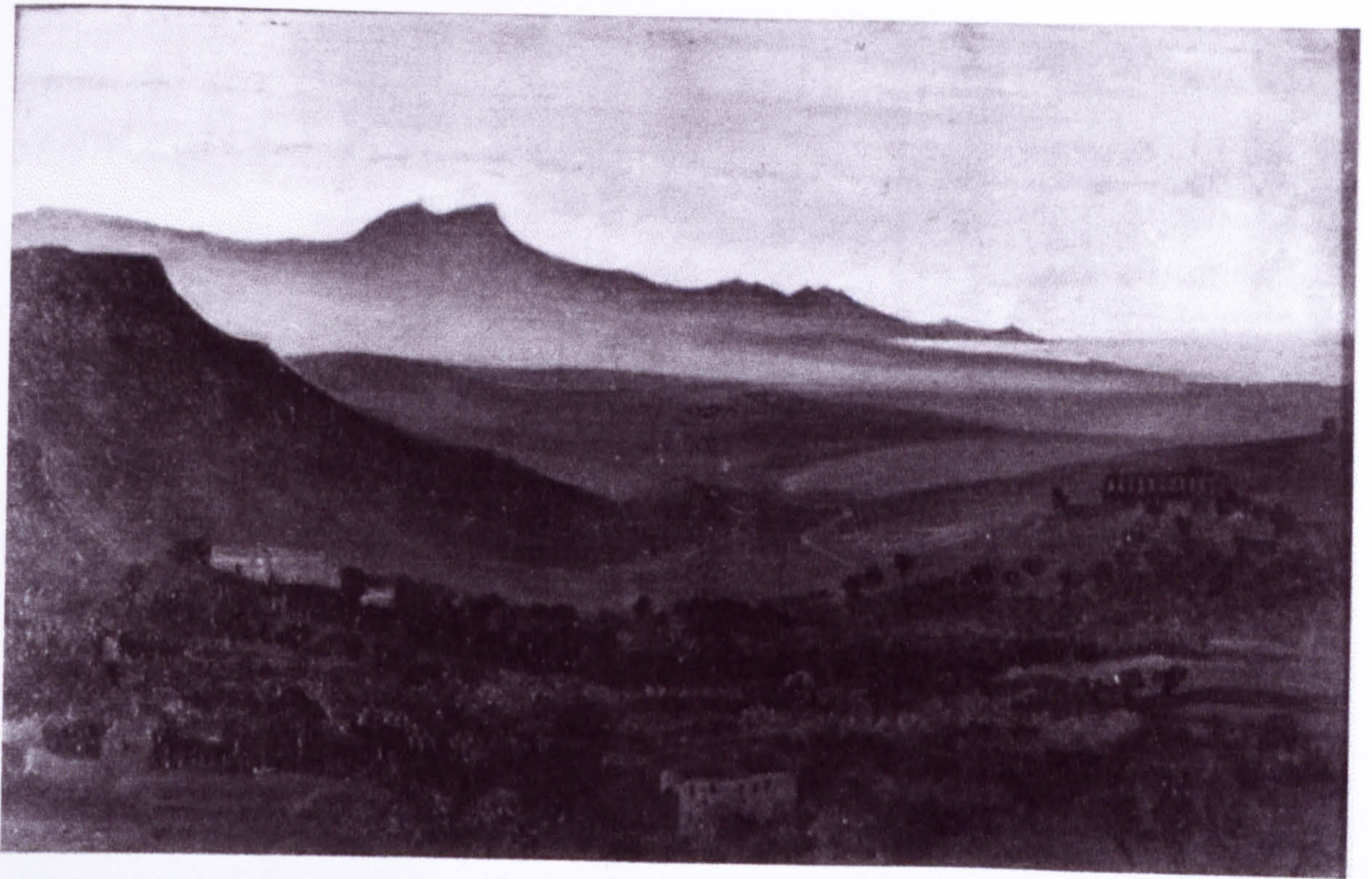


Fig. 52.



Fig. 53.

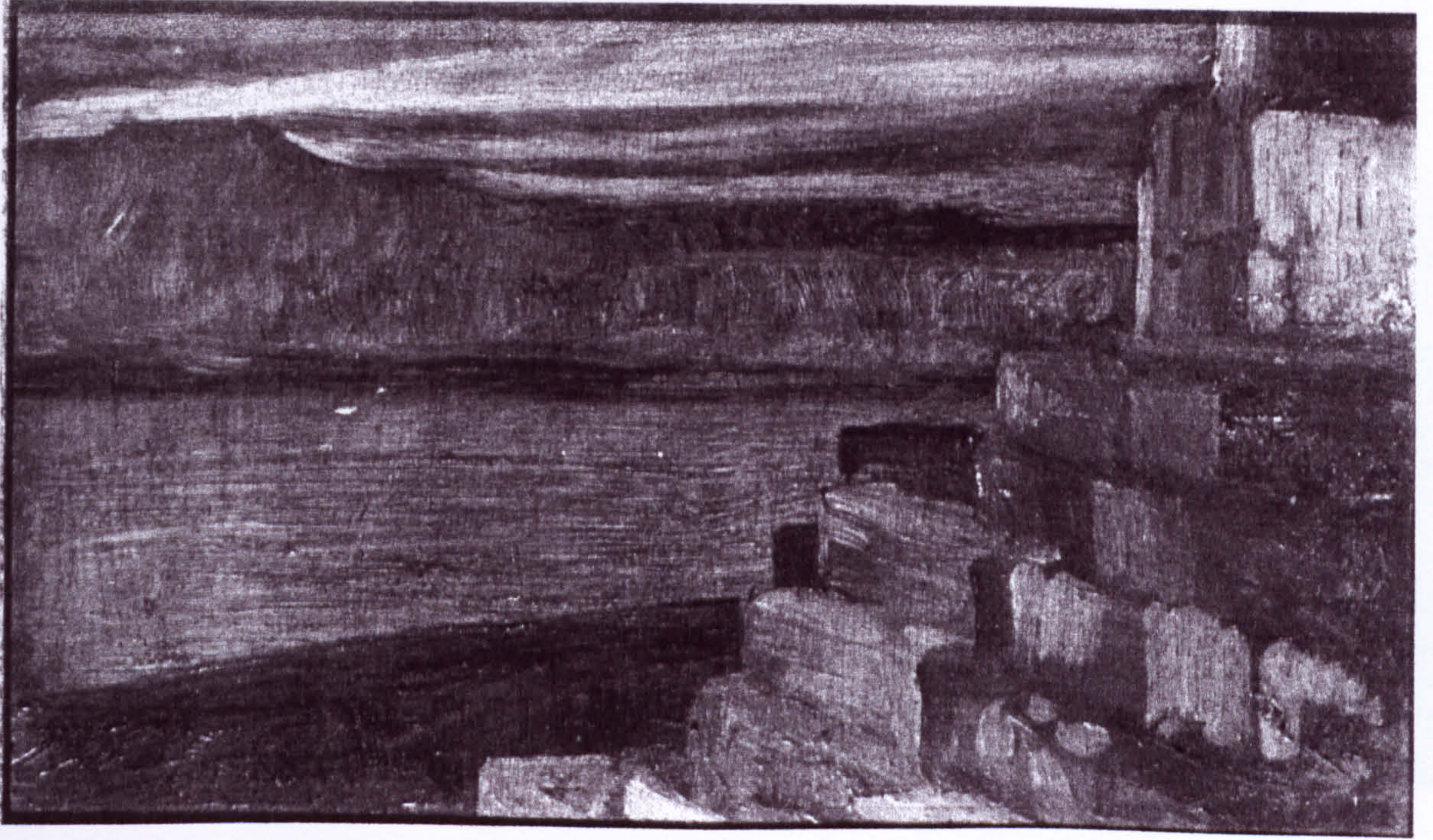


Fig. 54.

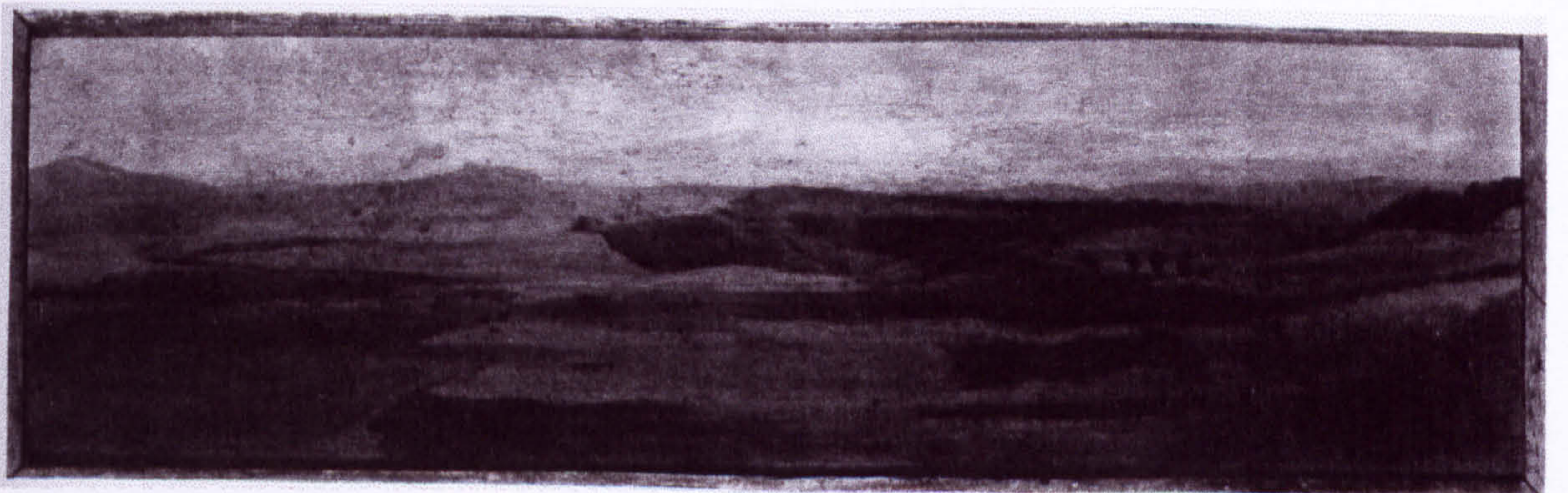


Fig. 54a.



Fig. 55.

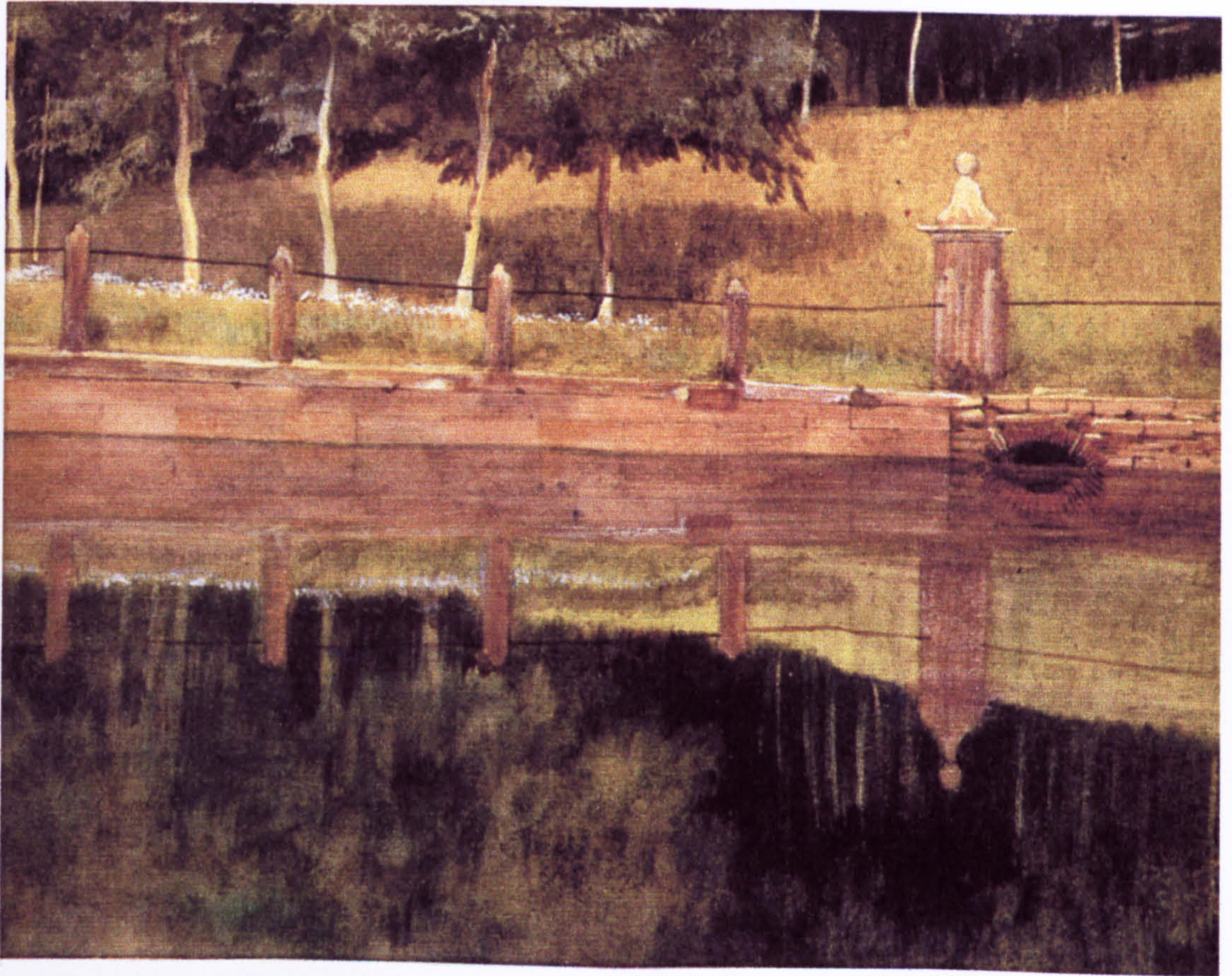


Fig. 56.

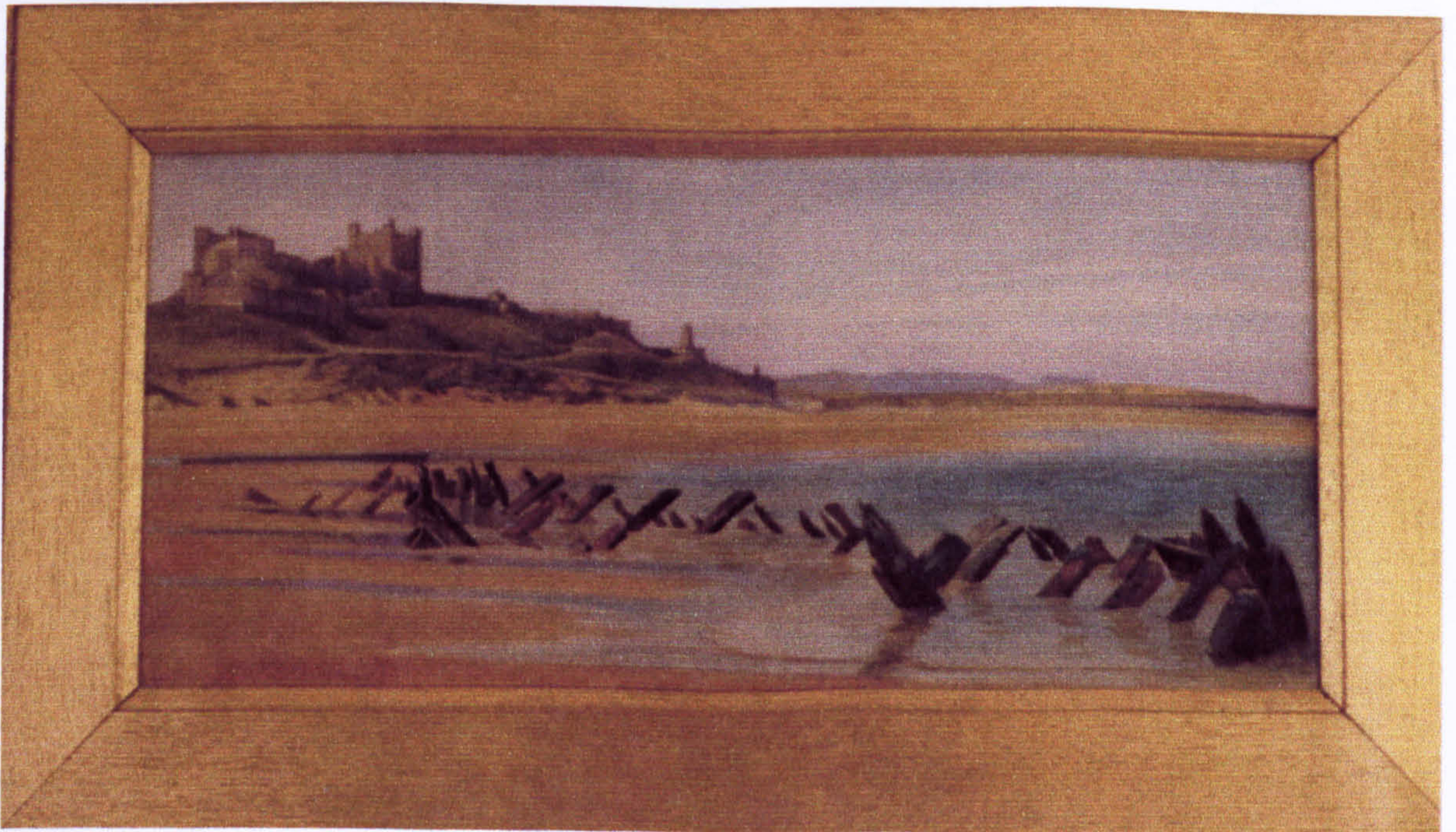


Fig. 57

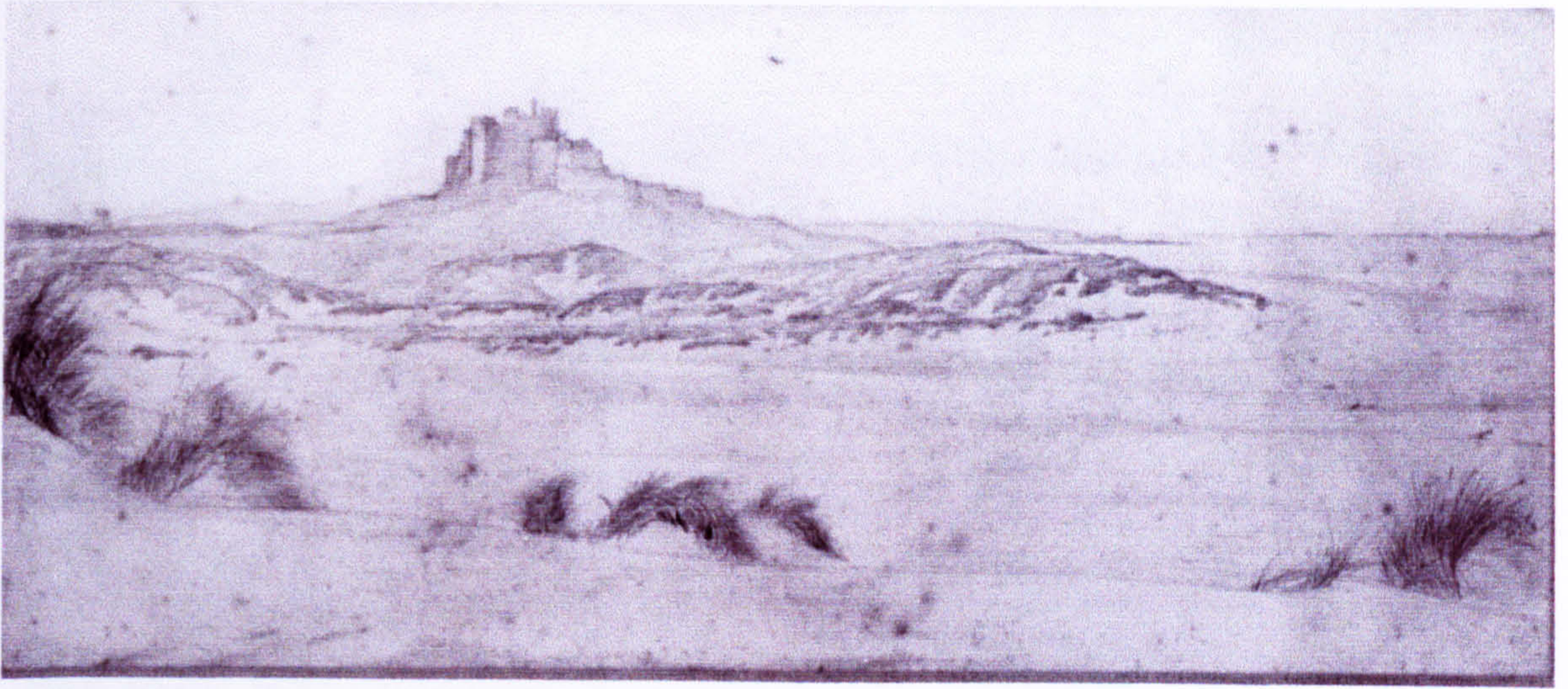


Fig. 58



Fig. 59.



Fig. 60.



Fig. 61

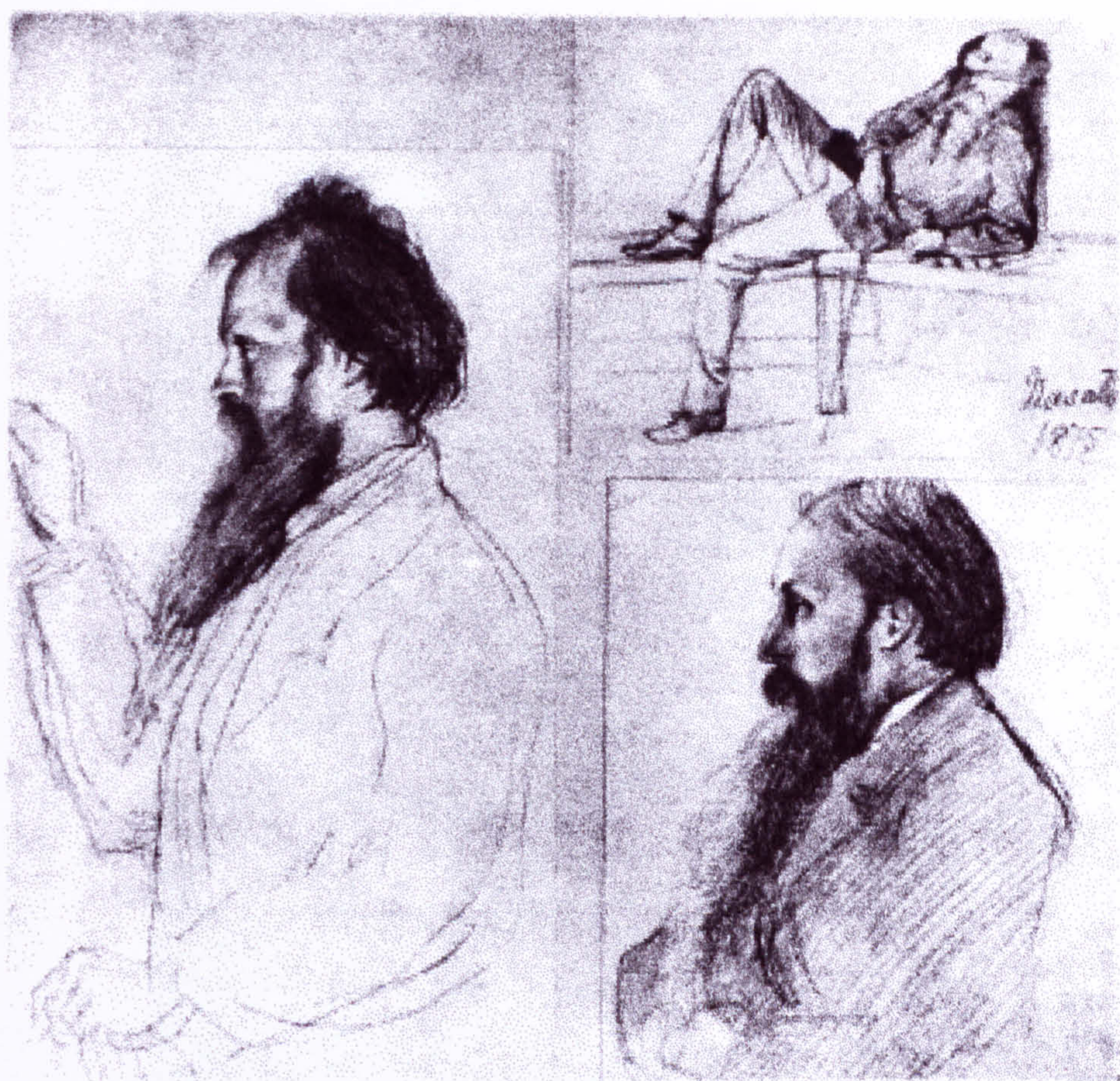


Fig. 62.



Fig. 63.



Fig. 64.



Fig. 64a.



Fig. 65.



Fig. 66



Fig. 67.

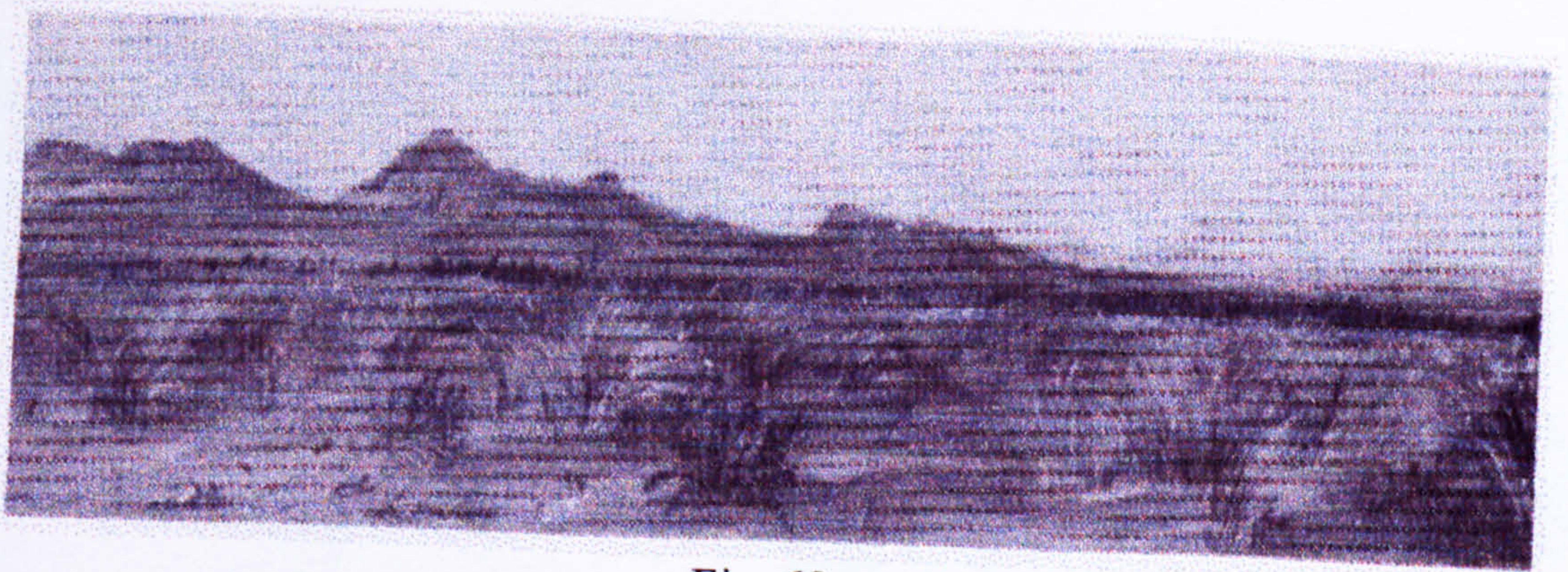


Fig. 68.



Fig. 69.



Fig. 70.

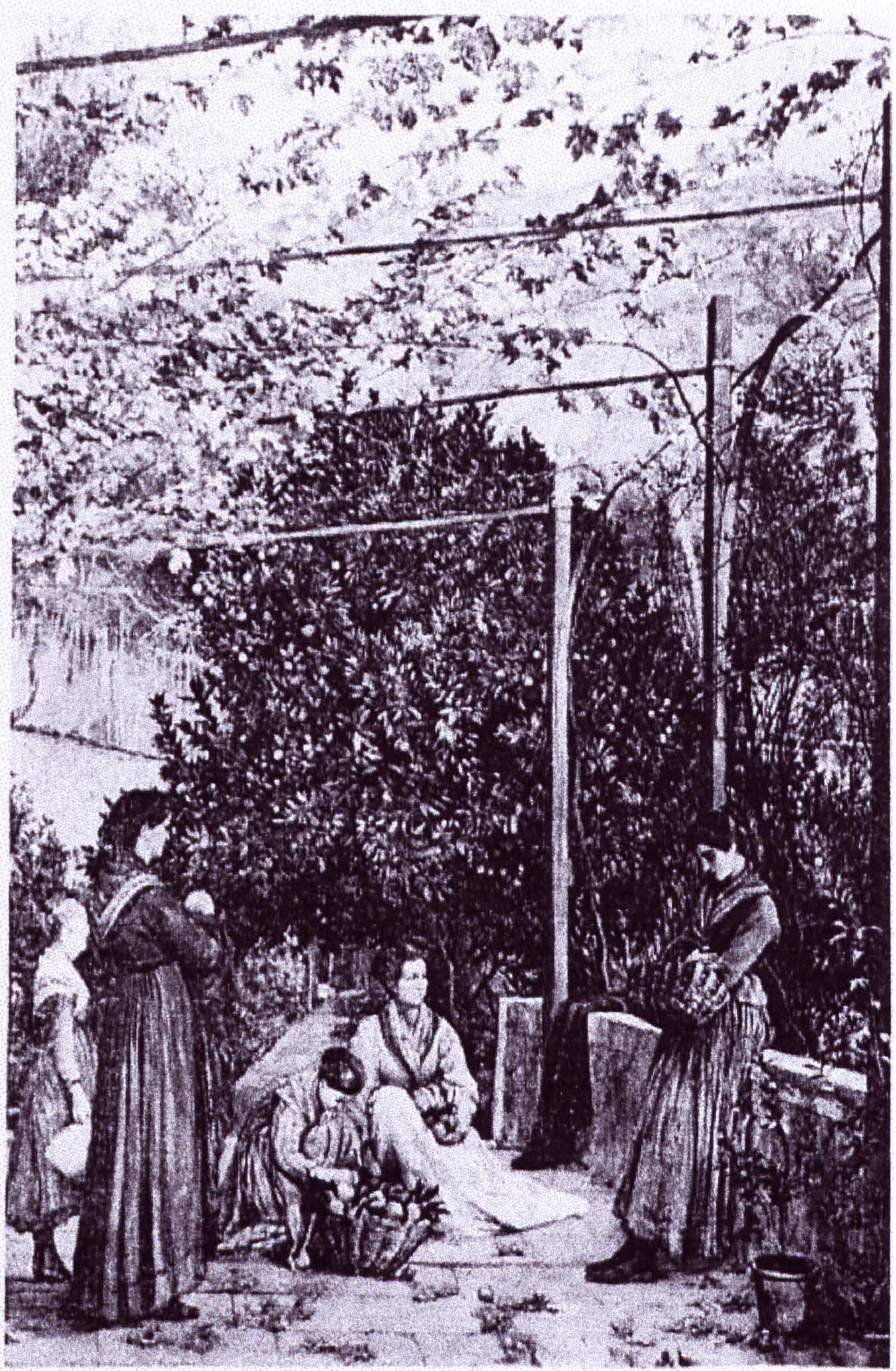


Fig. 71.



Fig. 72.



Fig. 73.



Fig. 74.



*

No. 97.

44 X 55.

No. 97. "The Olive Harvest, Algeria." EDGAR BARCLAY.

Fig. 75.



Fig. 76.



Fig. 77



Fig. 78.



Fig. 78.



Fig. 79.



Fig. 80.



Fig. 81.

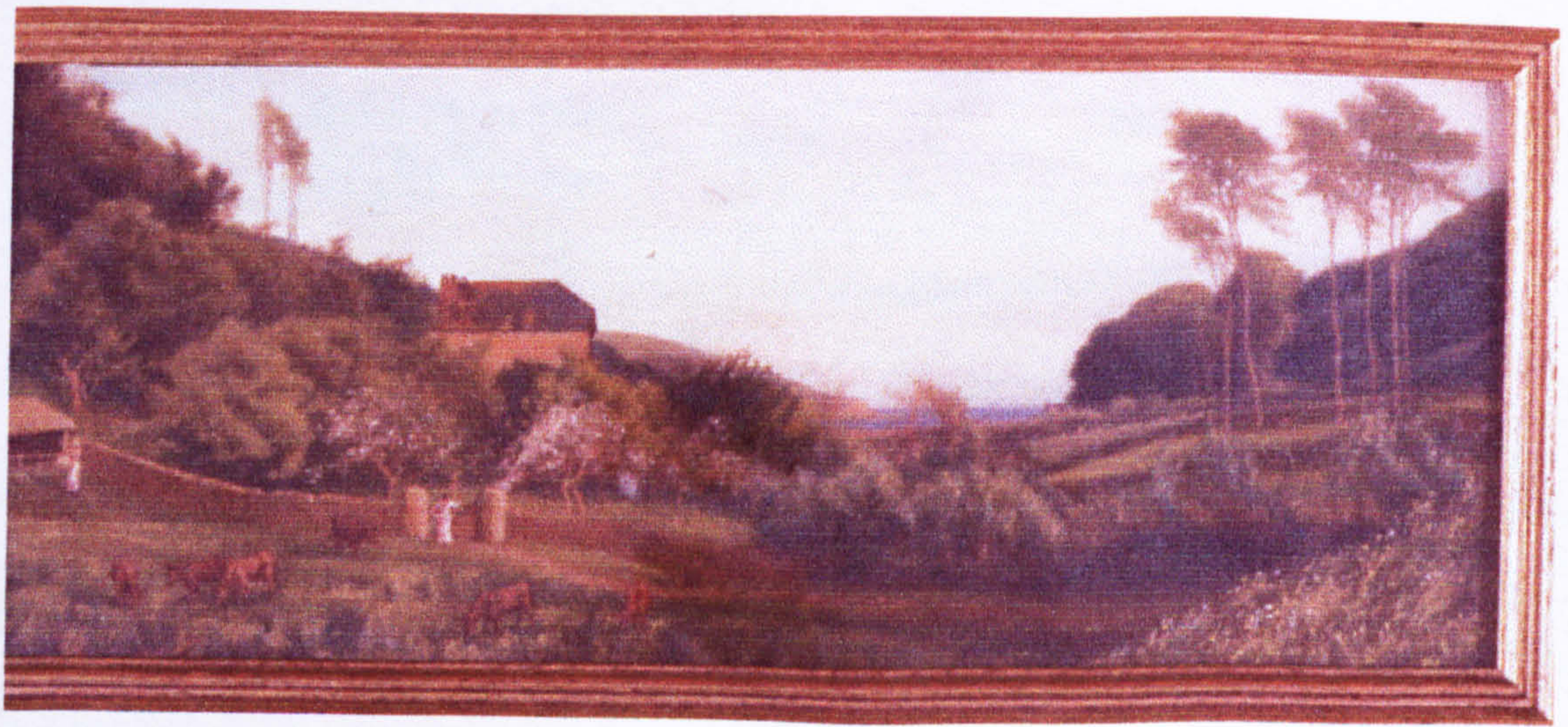


Fig. 82.

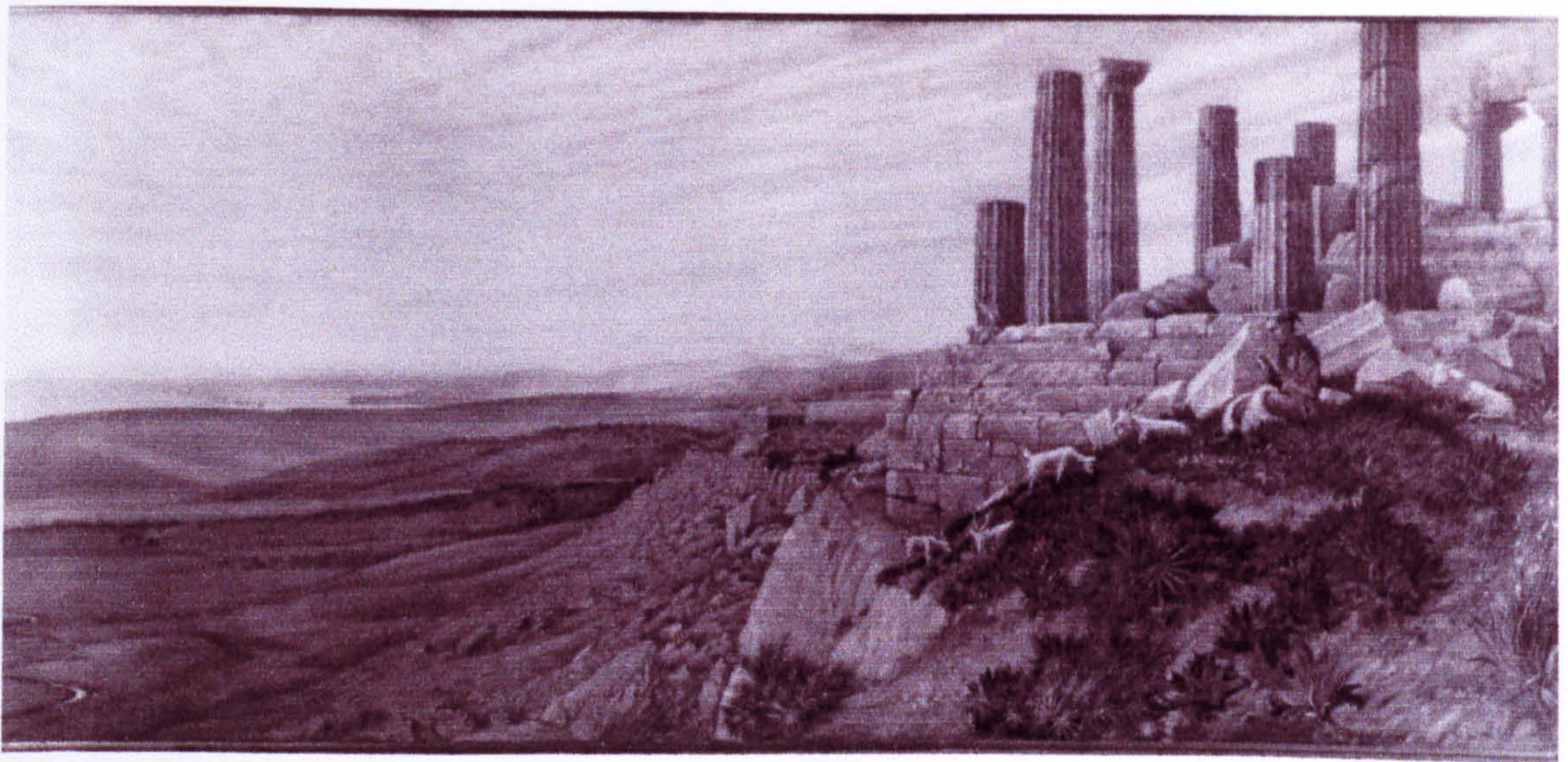


Fig. 83.



Fig. 84.



Fig. 85.

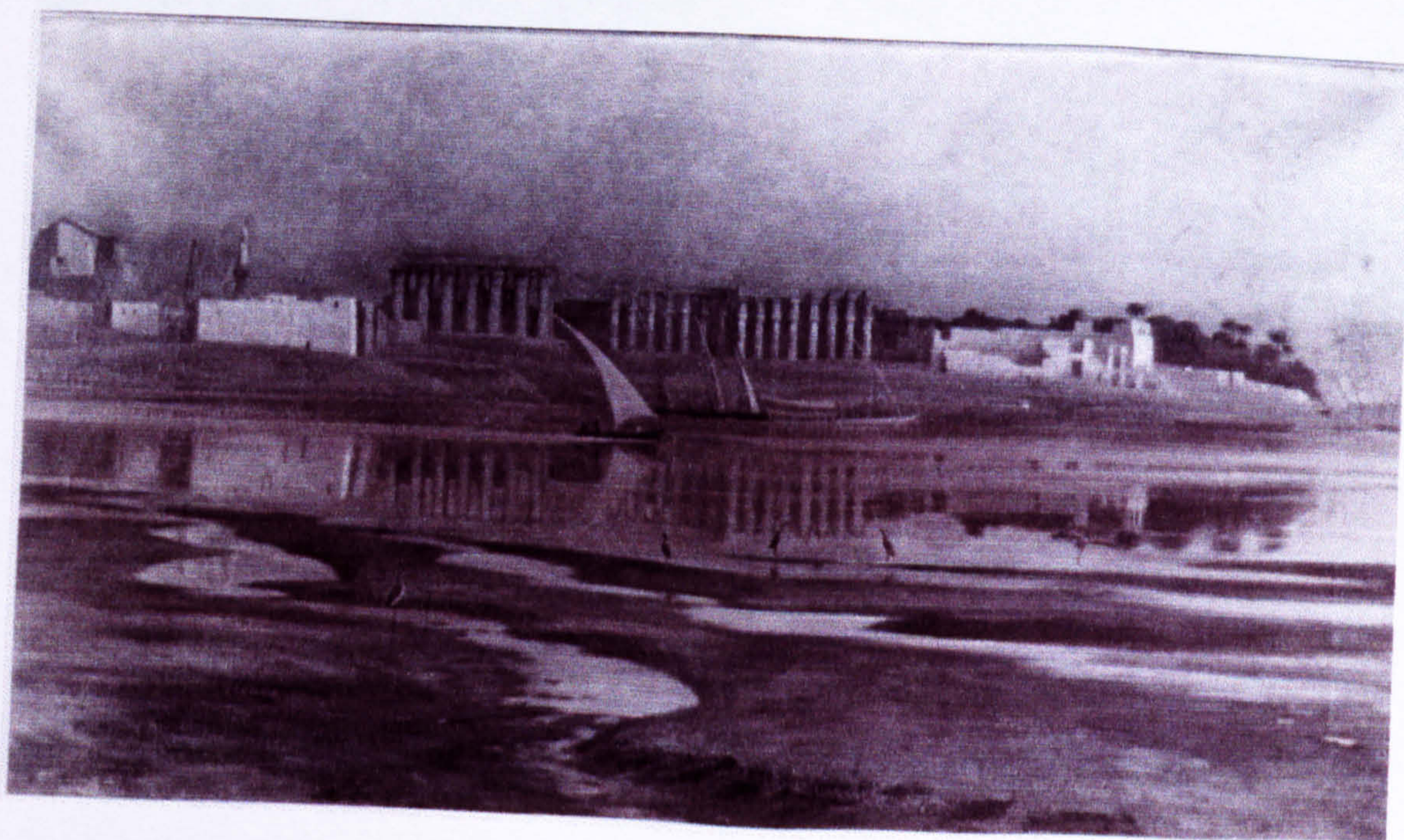


Fig. 86.



Fig. 87.



Fig. 88.

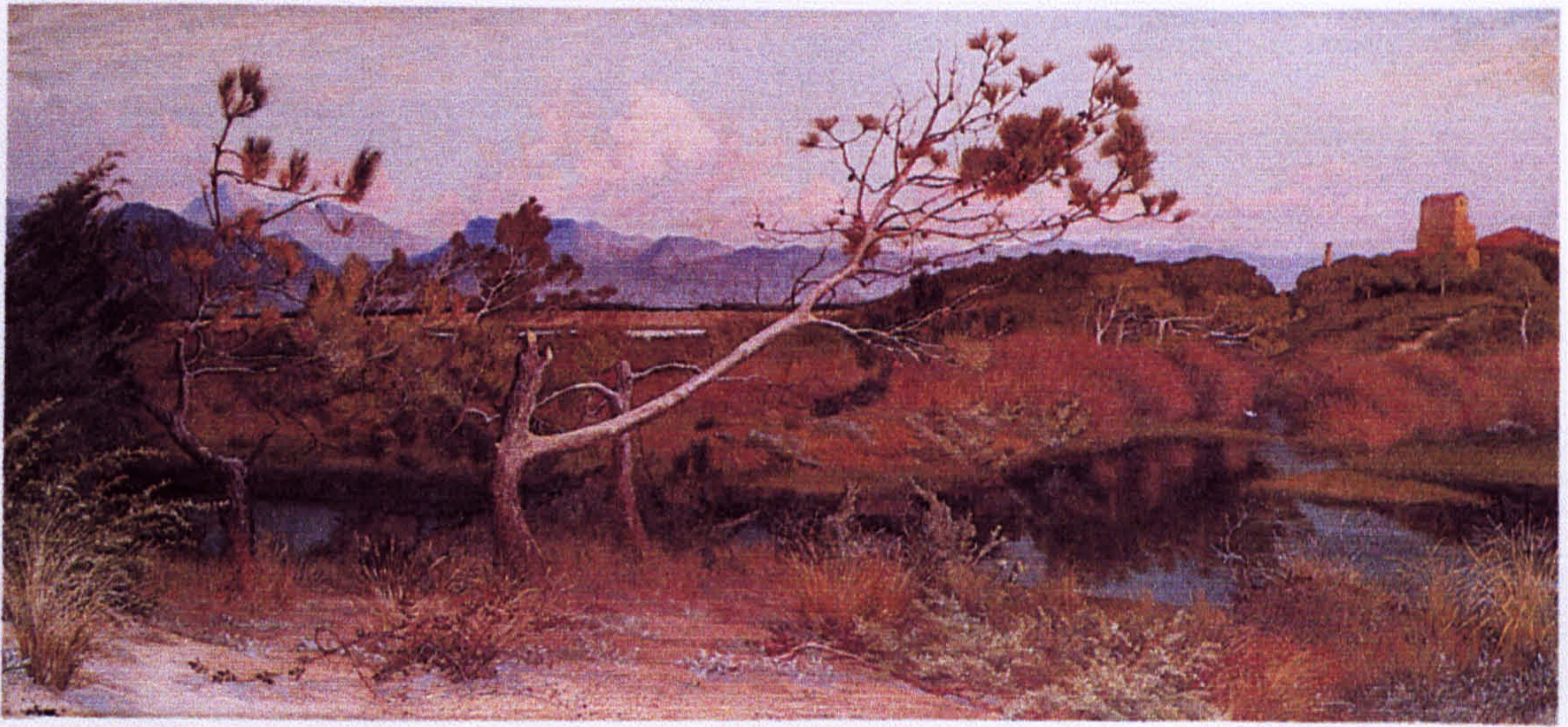


Fig. 89.

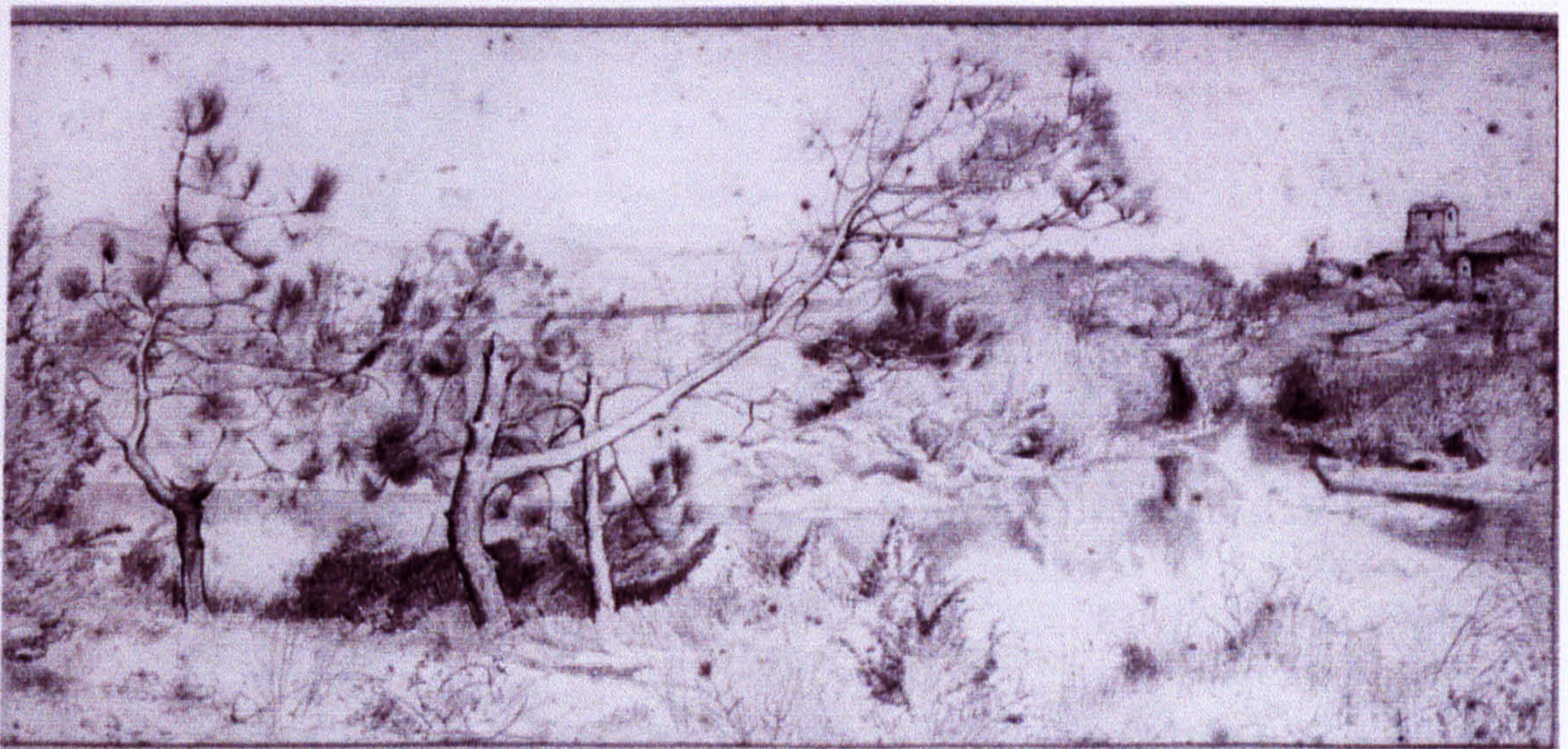


Fig. 90.



Fig. 91



Fig. 92.

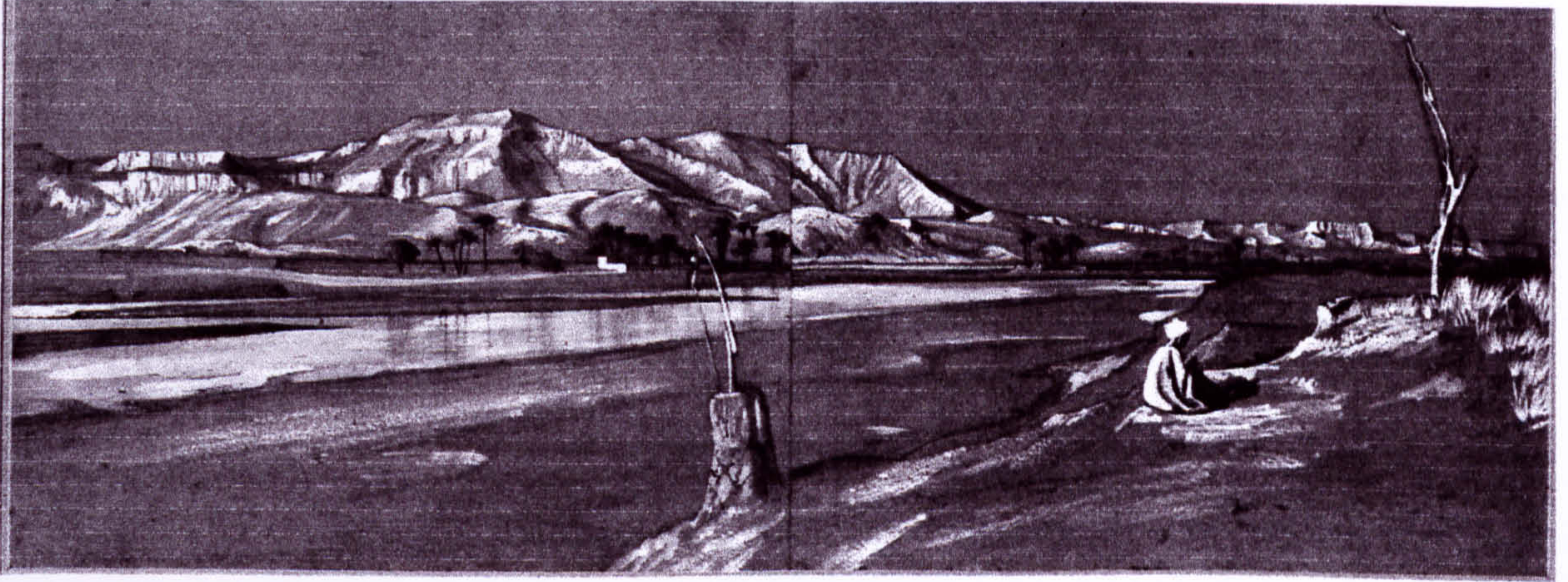


Fig. 92a.

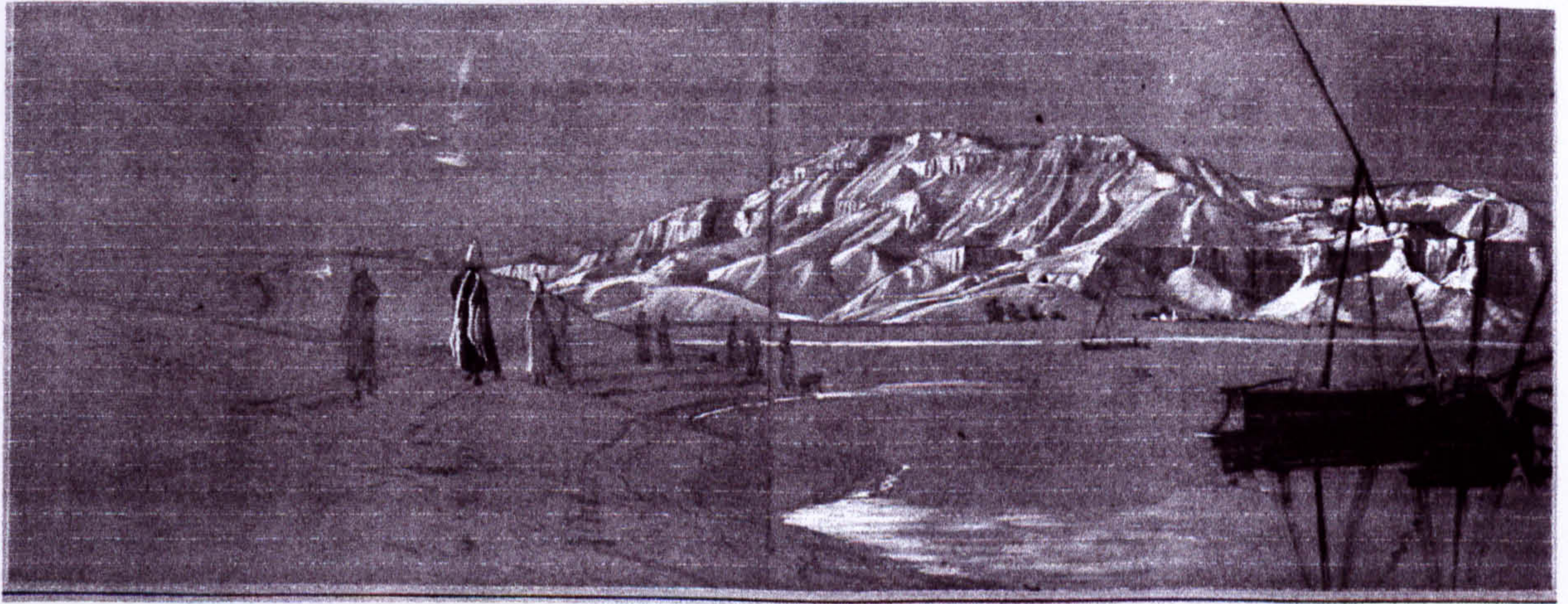


Fig. 92b.

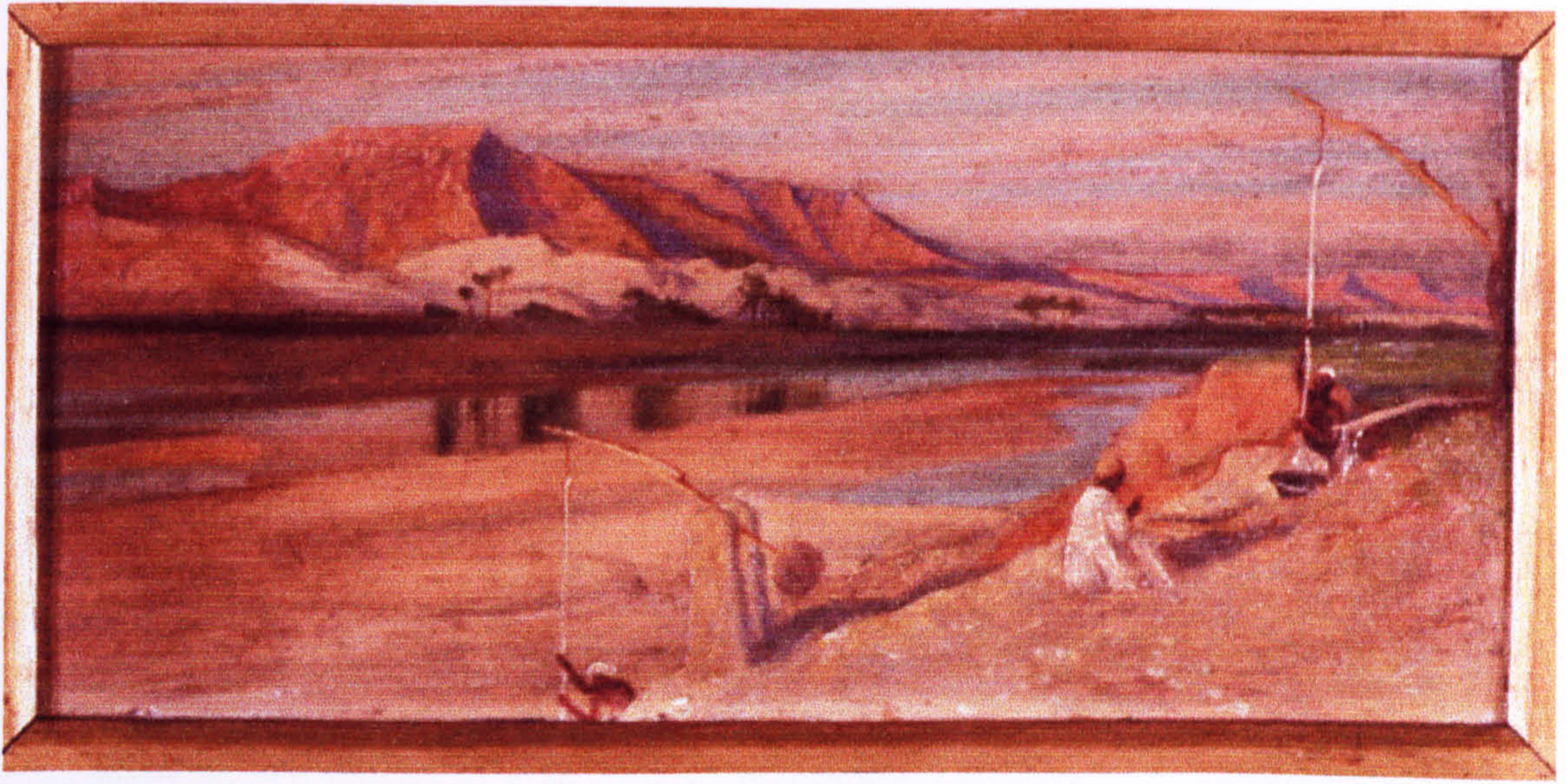


Fig. 93.



Fig. 94.



Fig. 95.

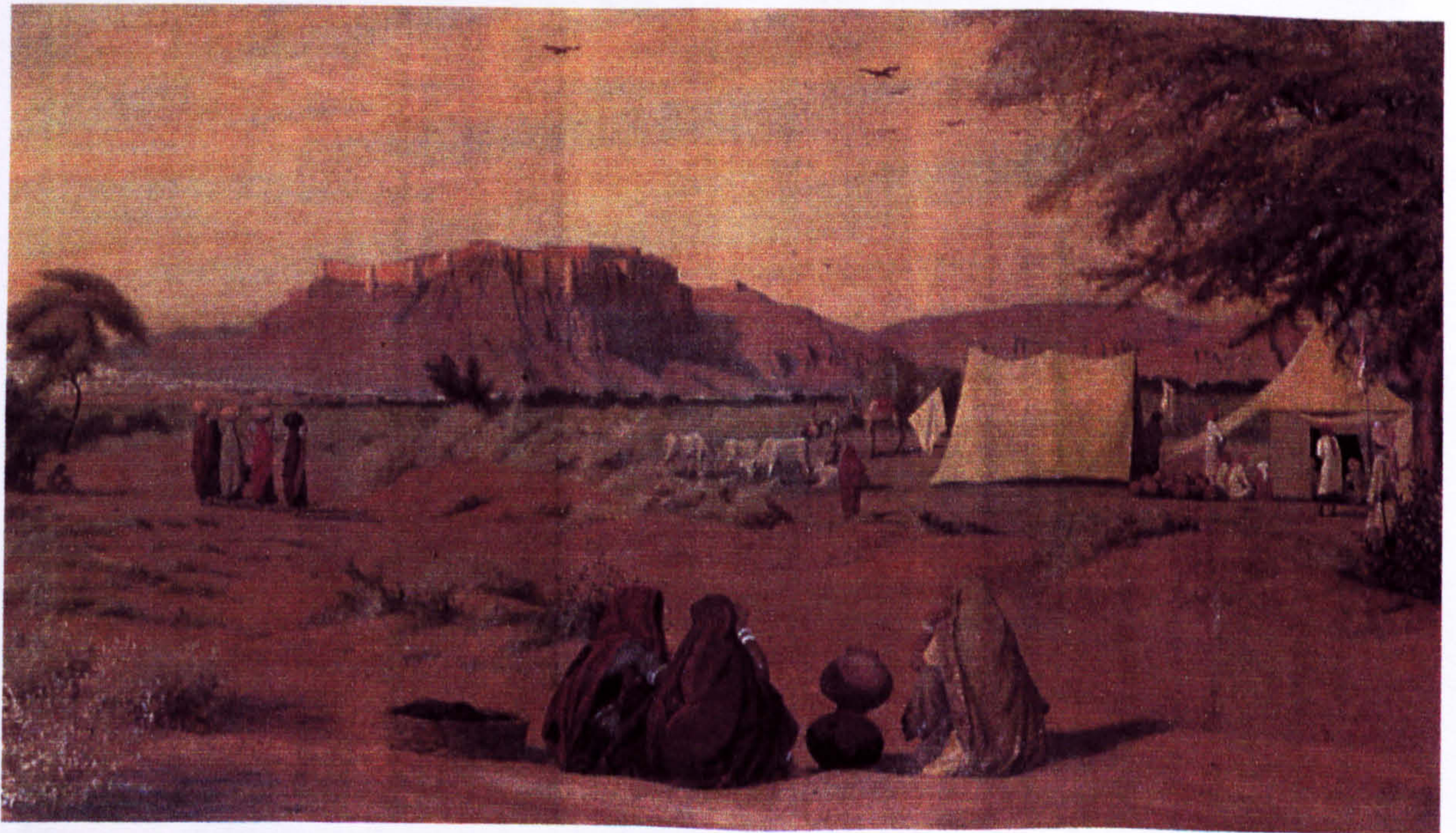


Fig. 95a.

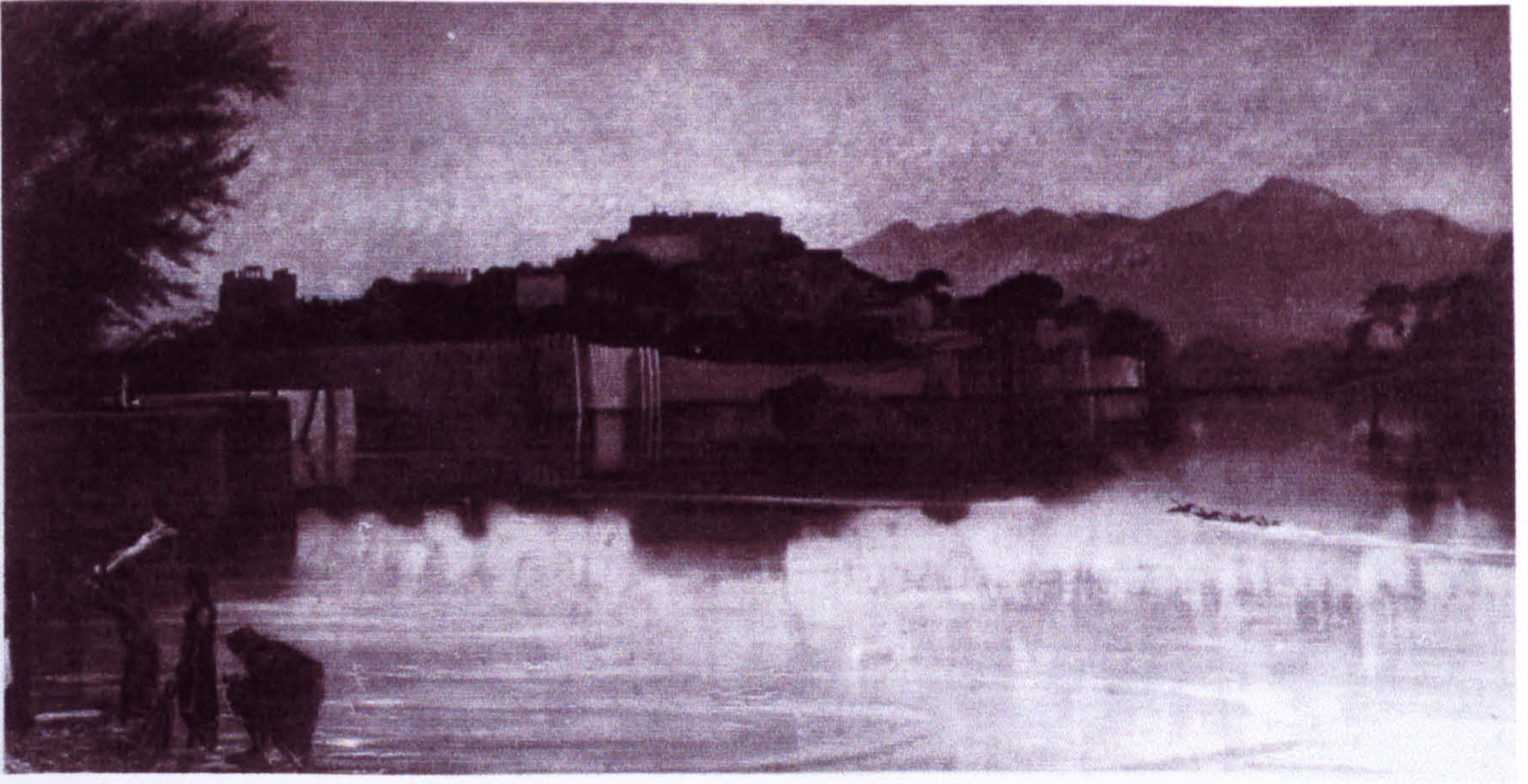


Fig. 96.



Fig. 97.



Fig. 98.



Fig. 99.



Fig. 100.

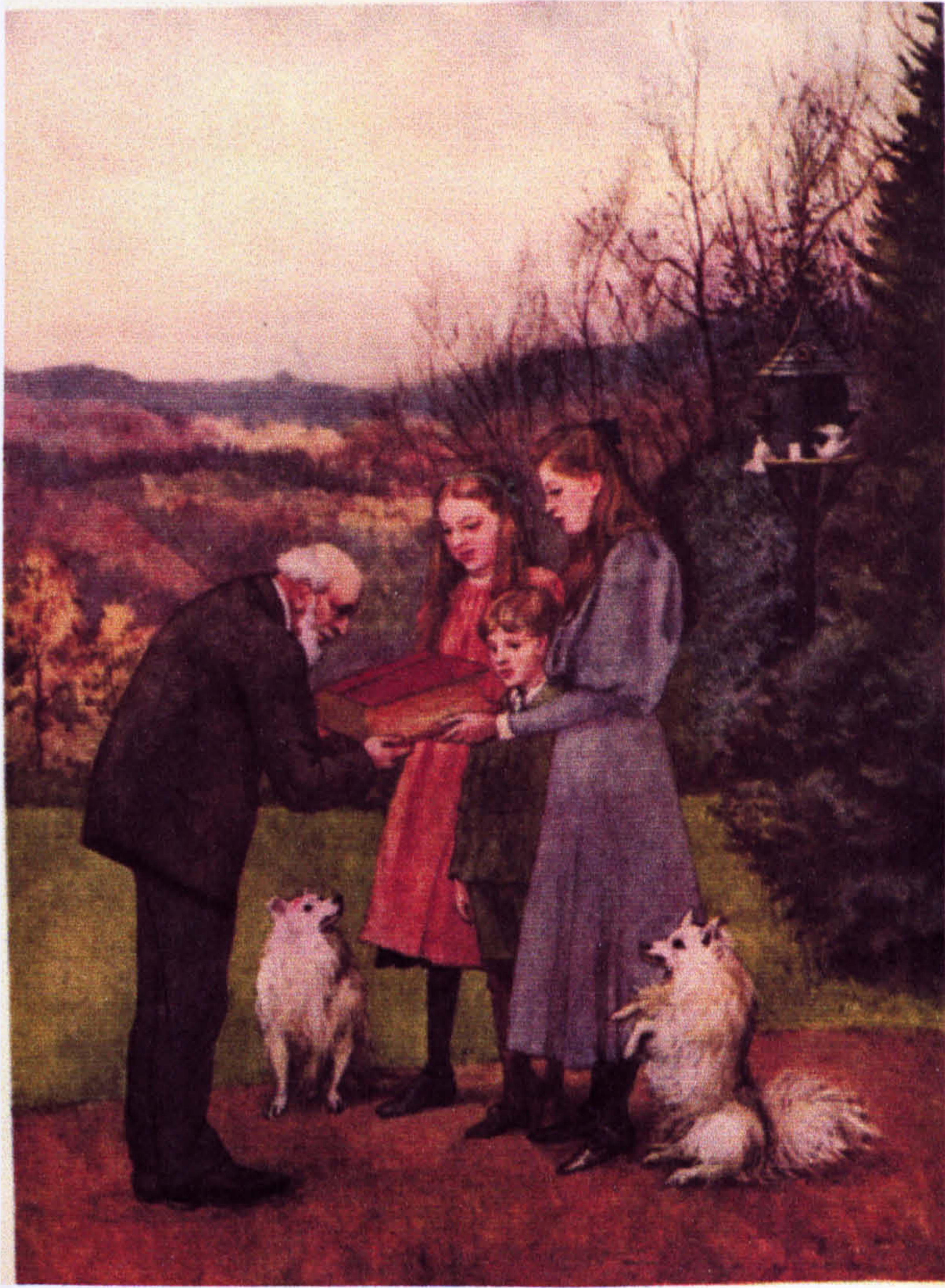


Fig. 101.



Fig. 102.

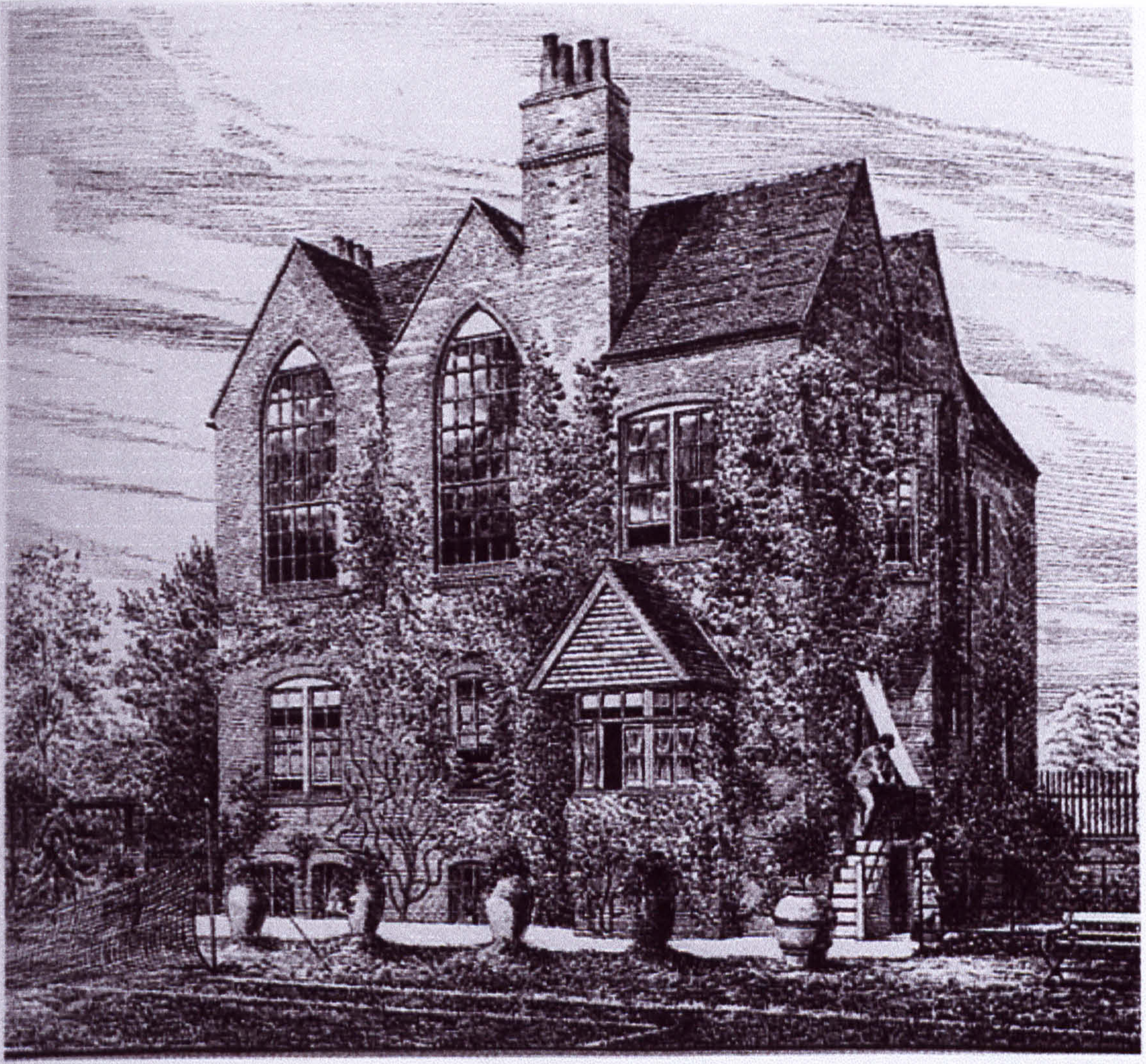


Fig. 103.

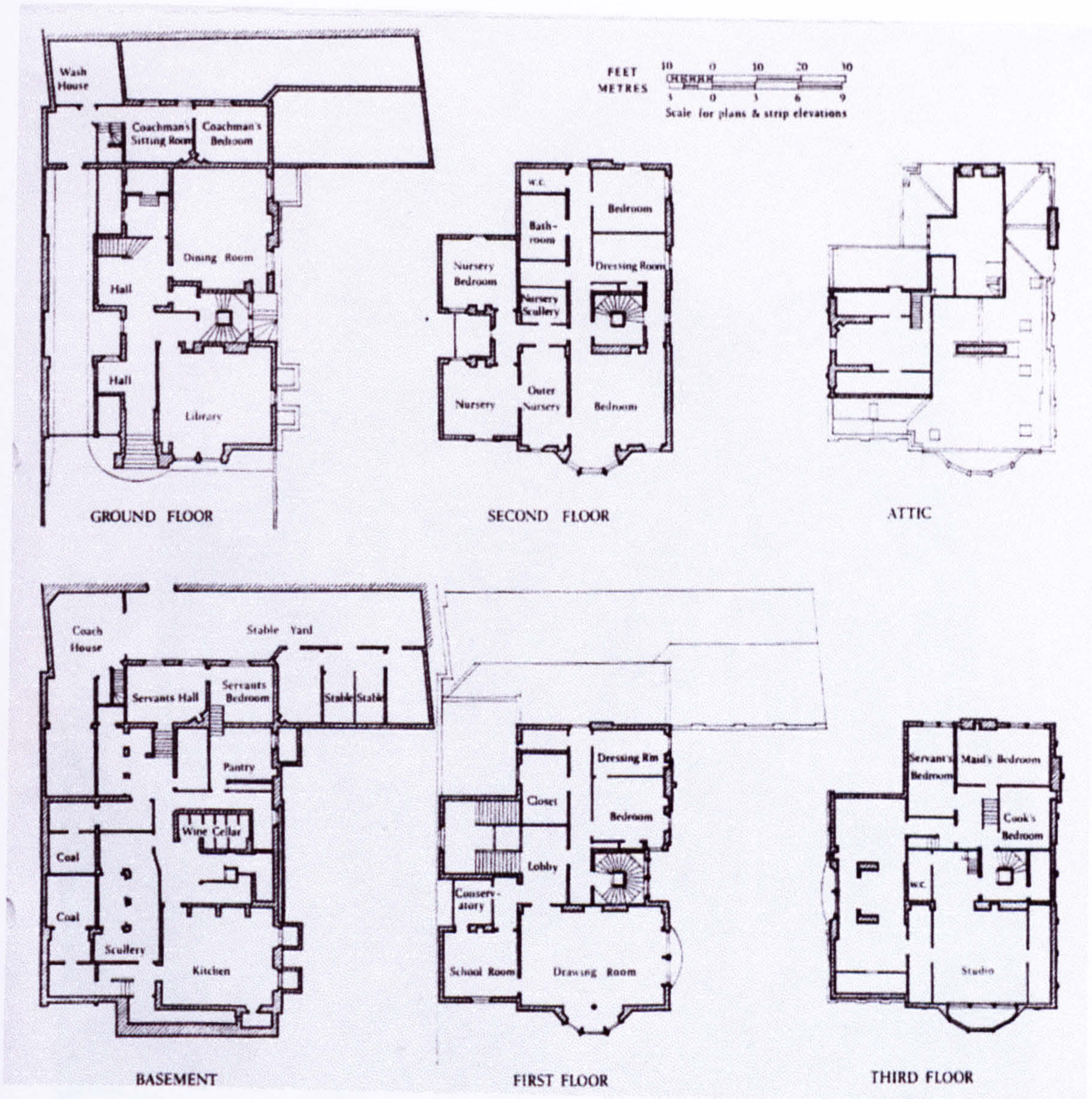


Fig. 104.



Fig. 105.

Fig 106 Missing



Fig. 107

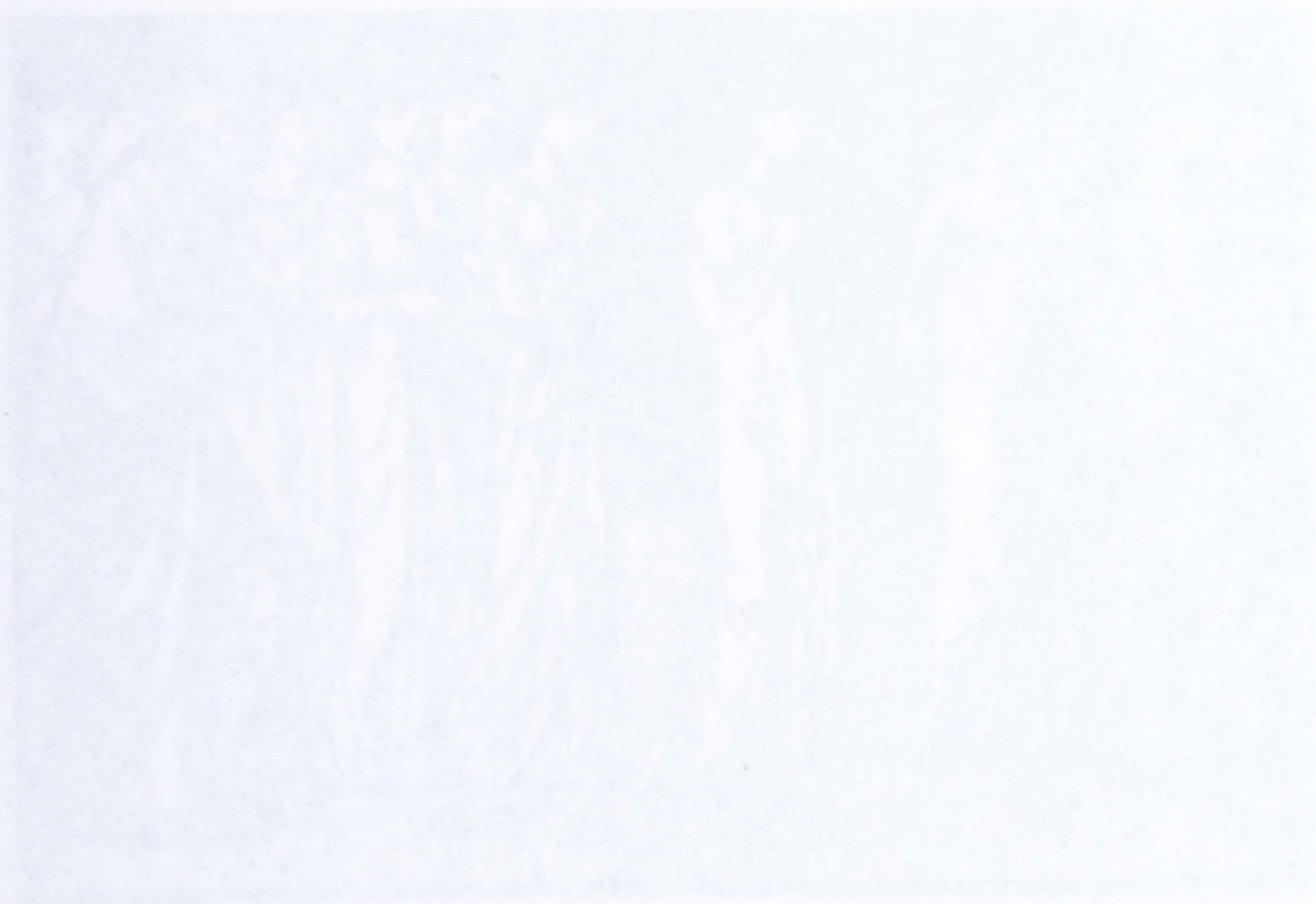


Fig. 108



Fig. 107



Fig. 108.



Fig. 109.



Fig. 110.



Fig. 111.

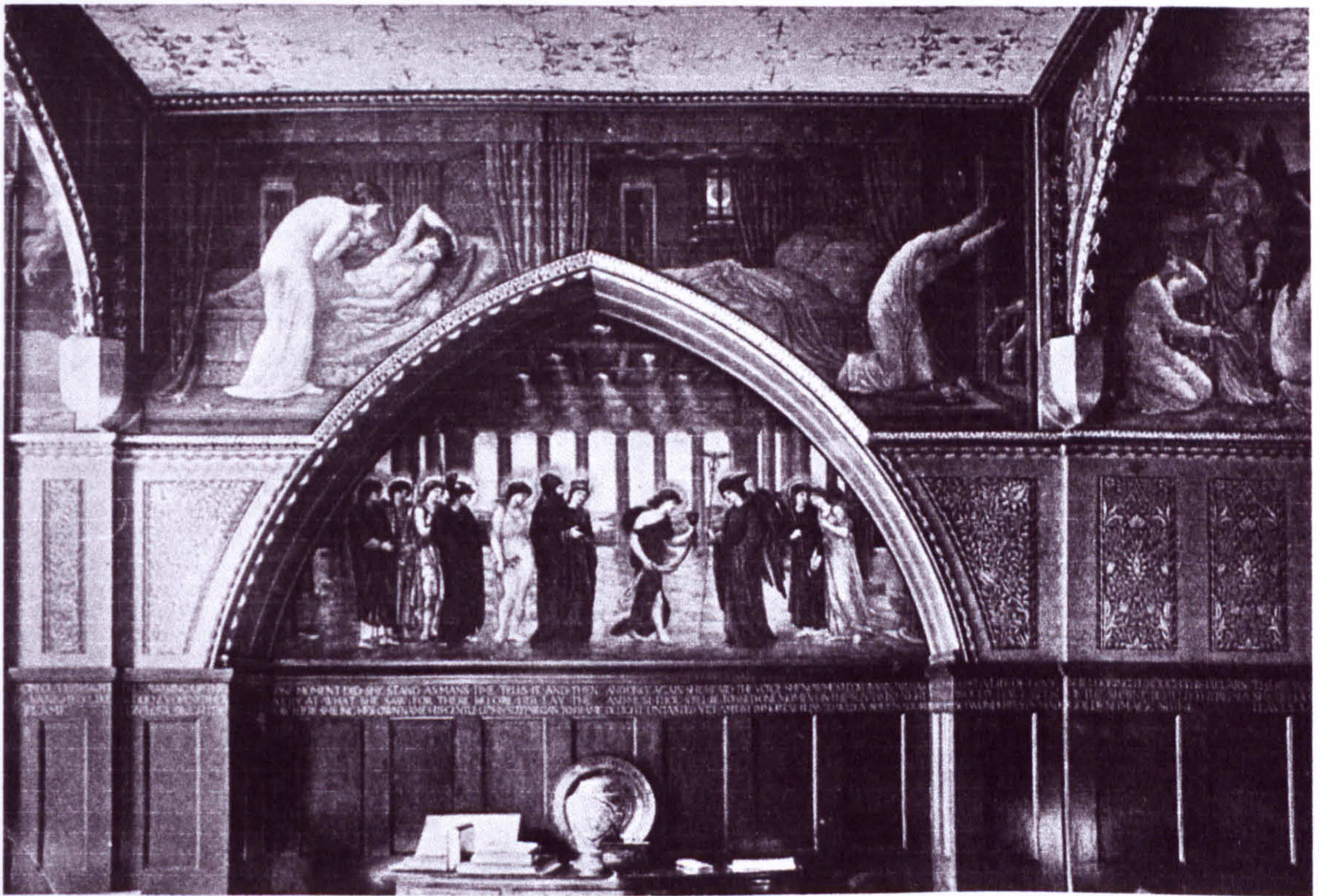


Fig. 112.



Fig. 113.



Fig. 114.

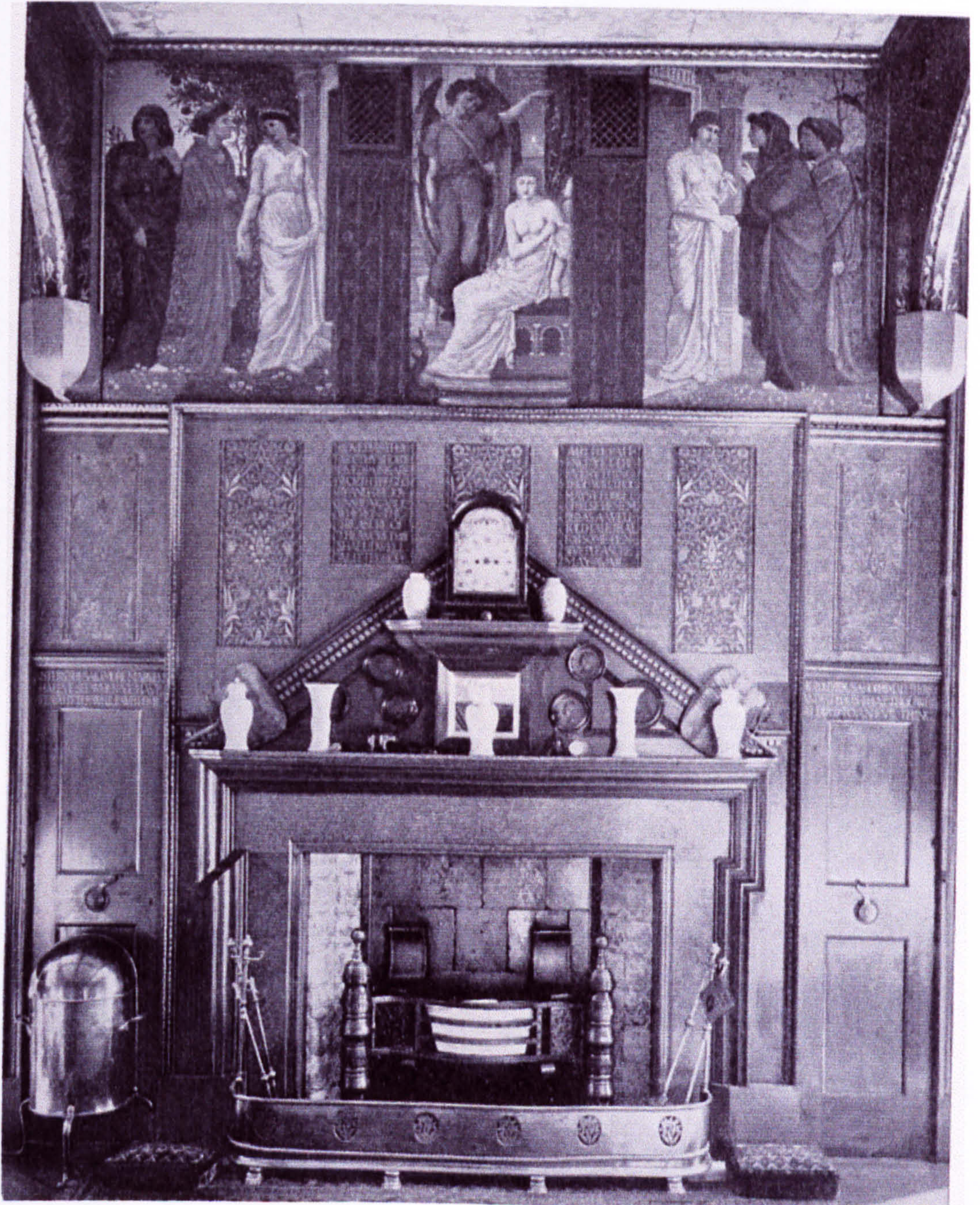


Fig. 115.



Fig. 116.



Fig. 117.

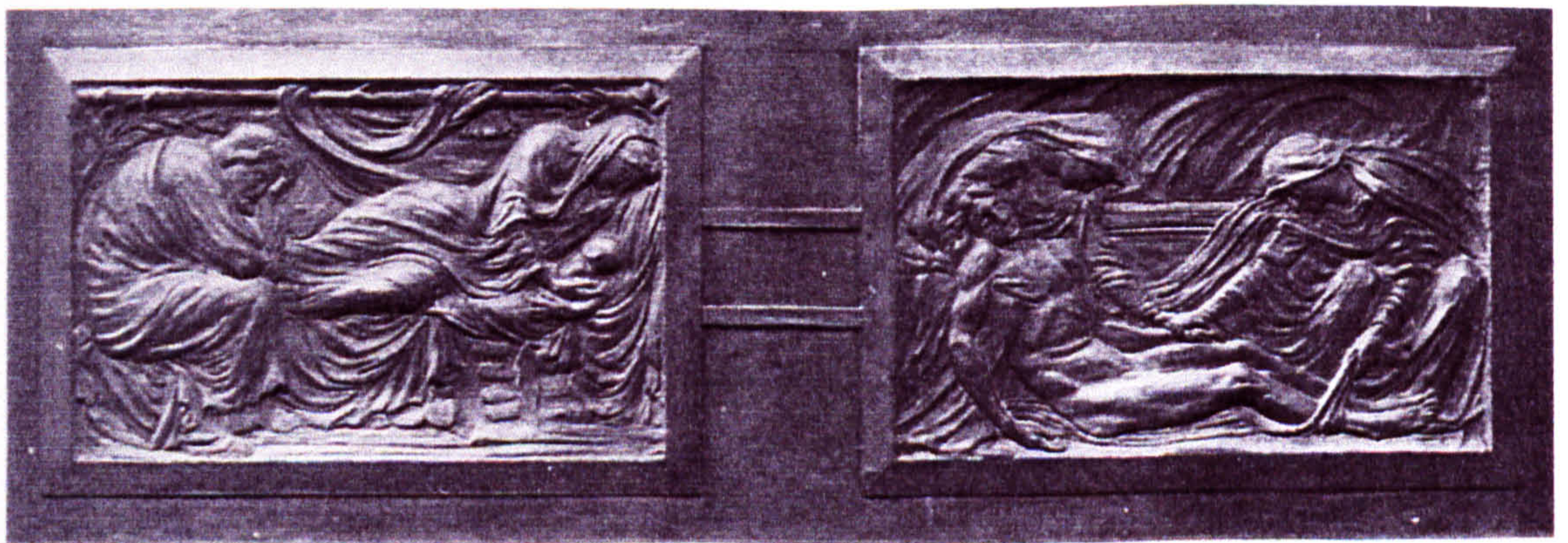


Fig. 118.



Fig. 119.



Fig.120.



Fig. 121.



Fig. 122.

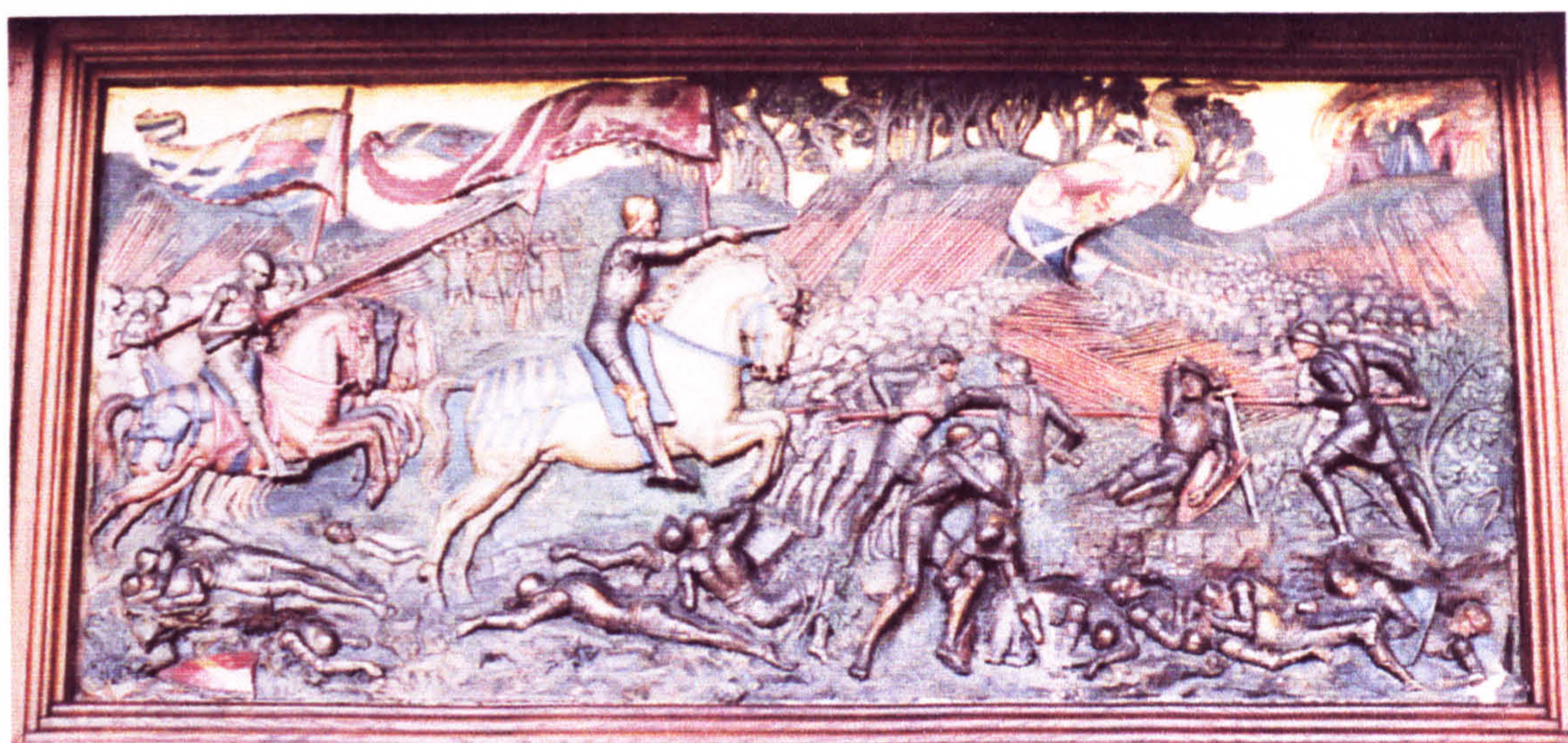


Fig. 123.



Fig. 124.

Appendix 1

From Estella Canziani, *Round about Palace Green*, pp.381-2.

Notes on technique, given to the author by George Howard

Canziani writes: 'I made daily notes of the remarks made by the visitors who came to the R.A. Schools...My notes are almost verbatim.'¹ The following passages are based on her conversations with Howard.

'Do every bit of work as well as you can in the time available.

My old master, Le Gros [sic], made us finish a bit at a time and often on his canvases there were heads dotted about all over the place quite finished, never to be touched again, whilst the rest of the canvas was blank.

My old master used to say, 'Never have the four corners of your picture the same; always vary them.' I don't say to lay it down as a principle for you always to follow, but you can take it for what you think it worth.

I should say make it a rule to finish in transparent colour, never mind fashion. The Venetians always finished in transparent colour, but, of course, now they say that they did not know how to paint! You will either paint well, or badly, whether you use paint thick, or thin, so do what is natural to you, and don't try to be strong through using thick paints; some weakness is very charming, and much paint is often only coarse. Use blotting paper to take out lights when the paint is wet, and you have put it down a little too much. Willy Richmond told me *that*, and it's very useful in oils. Work however you find it easiest. Use a sable brush when you find it helps you to draw.

Shortness of time is no excuse for bad work.

For a single-primed canvas this recipe of Watts's is useful. Cover the canvas with white, ground with turpentine and a very little linseed oil. Put this on a hog's hair brush and then slightly flatten it with a palette knife. When dry, take Cadmium yellow and make it fluid like a water colour by means of turpentine and Copal varnish, in the proportion of six of turps to one of Copal.

¹ p.373

When painting the East the shadows cannot be too blue in sunlight.

All that I tell you was mostly told me by Costa. He said, '*Il nemico del pittore all'oglio e l'oglio,*'² and so it is. Why not wash your picture with potato and then work on it with body colour? You get good quality that way. In sunlight the light on the top of the steps would be lighter than the light on the side of the steps. I would not work too much from your sketches of action, but go on as Burne-Jones did, up to the finish of the picture, making careful and highly finished drawings of hands, heads, and feet, or else work direct from nature, otherwise you will lose the look of nature. I do not want you to copy the Sargents and Henrys, far from it. Don't compromise your drawing in the very least, but I think that you might aim a little at what they aim at in the massing of things. Let your treatment go, as my old master used to say, *avec le sens* of the thing.

Look at Durer's wood-cuts. You have no need to be discouraged; the greatest painters have been discouraged.'

² 'To the artist's eye, the enemy is the eye.'

Appendix 2

Transcript of a letter from Edward Burne-Jones to George Howard, dated November 1887. (Castle Howard Archive, J22/27)

'Cain and Halle have been on the point of resigning for a year and a half past - my own feeling is that if they leave, all guarantee is over that the place will be worth exhibiting in - a hundred changes are happening - the dominant spirit of the place is one Pike...and a lesser spirit below him but very potent is Wade and our hierarchy stands thus:

PIKE

WADE

Sir Coutts Lindsay

Halle

Cain

and then the poor painters - & I don't like it - and Sir Coutts won't change it - & Cain and Halle won't stand it and Tadema definitely won't send any more.

I kept my counsel & spoke no single word to anyone - not wishing to bias anyone - as a proof I have not exchanged a word with Tadema yet - & his action wholly independent of mine is uninfluenced by it - and as I think Cain and Halle quite right in their quarrel & think also that they have borne much for nearly two years I mean to stand by them through thick and also thin and the gallery is Sir Coutts['] own to do what he likes with it [sic] and I am my own to do what I like with me.

I am very sorry - indeed little short of wretched at first - I am not going to explain to newspapers for their amusement...Sir Coutts wants more interest out of the concern...&...Cain & Halle who stood between us & the devil knows what of larks and junk won't stand or sit in the siege perilous any more & are going to begin a new gallery if we can & want your help if you think us right after having heard all the tale - but I

don't want to influence you - We came to a deadlock and amputation is better than mortification. It seems to me I am always resigning something or another though I should have said I was a peaceable fellow enough.'

Appendix 3

Reviews of *A Picture Song Book*

The Times of India, October 18th 1910:

In the earlier days of the Grosvenor Gallery exhibitions, the Earl of Carlisle was wont to show watercolours of landscape, distinguished by refinement and knowledge learned by association with some of the most cultured artists, English and foreign, of their day. But little intimation was afforded from these exhibits that he was endowed with a faculty of illustrating figure subjects which require invention, draughtsmanship and composition. That he is capable of this a volume of old ballads, illustrated in colour, after his watercolours, which is just published, will abundantly testify.

The Standard, December 1910:

...but it is more particularly in respect of the illustrations that the value of the book consists. The position of the Earl of Carlisle as an adept in watercolour painting has long been recognised, but the subjects by which he has been known were mainly landscape. This book will therefore come as a surprise as showing an inventive faculty and facility of design of no mean order.

The Scotsman, December 1st 1910:

In their present appearance the songs are important only as giving opportunities for the pictorial art of their illustrator, the Earl of Carlisle...Lord Carlisle's skill as a landscapist in watercolour has been already made known and rejoiced in among amateurs of the fine arts. These always interesting and pleasing, and often charming compositions, show him attempting a probably more exacting field of expression, the dramatic. They are admirable book-illustrations, well designed for the entertainment of children, playfully alert with life and character, romantic in sentiment, and historical enough to satisfy any not too pedantic critic.

Appendix 4

Proposed accommodation at 1 Palace Green, transcribed from Philip Webb's draft, 1867. (Castle Howard Archive, J22/64)

'Ground Floor

Dining Room

Library (easily got at from lib[rary] bedroom on next floor)

Cloakroom & WC

Entrance Hall

Municipal Stairs

Second Stairs (to serve as principle stairs for floor over)

Lift

1st Floor

Drawing room

School Room

Library bedroom & Dressing room

Linen Closet

Housemaids Closet

WC

2nd stairs & lift

Second Floor

Mr & Mrs Howard's Bedroom & Dressing Room

Nursery

Nursery Bedroom

Scullery to Nursery to serve as housemaids closet

Spare Bedroom

Linen closet

Attic Floor

Studio with closets

Cooks Bedroom

Lady's maid's bedroom to serve as workroom

Housemaids bedroom for 3 beds (over)

Basement

Kitchen, Scullery, Larder

Pantry, Store room

China closet

Servants Hall

Bedroom: 2 man servants

Wine & beer cellars

Coal cellar etc.

Stables, coach house etc.'

Appendix 5

Decorative schemes at 1 Palace Green, compiled from Rosalind Howard's account books (Castle Howard Archive J23/105), household inventories (Castle Howard Archive, H2/6) and an undated inventory in her hand (Private Collection).

Schemes of partial redecoration were ongoing at Palace Green over a protracted period, the later schemes showing a more pronounced leaning towards the Eastern and Far Eastern styles that found favour with adherents of the Aesthetic Movement. This is indicated by the increasing volume of purchases from Liberty's, to which were added acquisitions from curiosity shops, 'Japanese shops' and floor coverings from the Bagdad [sic] Jew Ephraim'. Those schemes given below must be considered in this context, and are intended to present only a window on what was at the time considered an interior of distinction.

Dates of acquisition are appended where known. All textiles and wallpapers were purchased from Morris & Company, unless otherwise specified. Inverted commas indicate Rosalind Howard's terminology.

Ground floor

Dining room

The principal item of furniture in the dining room was the dining table designed by Webb, and produced by the Firm. In 1881 glassware was purchased for the table, made by Powell of Whitefriars. The dining chairs were green and gold rush-seated simulated bamboo. A photograph of the dining room fireplace taken in 1887 (fig. 115) shows that the Aesthetic taste was much in evidence, Far Eastern ceramics and hand-fans being amongst the *objects* arranged on the mantel shelves. Embroidered Morris curtains, purchased for £40, hung at the windows.

Hall and staircase

Seat furniture upholstered in Red Rose and Thistle stood in the hall, as did several Sussex chairs. The following pictures were hung on the walls:

Baptism by Alphonse Legros, 1869

The Barricades by Alphonse Legros (purchased in 1876 for £40-0-0)

Sketch entitled *The Moorland Pool* by Alphonse Legros

'The Cello Player (small)' by Alphonse Legros

Portrait of Edward Burne-Jones by Alphonse Legros, 1867 (purchased for £42)

The Pool, Thames by Charles Napier Hemy, 1870
 Study for *The Toilet* by Augustus Egg (purchased in 1907)
Head of a woman [red chalk] by Burne-Jones
 'Portrait of a girl with kitten' by GF Watts 1874
The Border Country by Walter James (given to George Howard in 1903)
 13 small sketches by George Howard
Winter Woodland by A.W. Henley
A Wood Scene by A.W. Henley
 Landscape sketch: 'group of trees near water' by A.W. Henley
 '3 small figure pictures by Arthur Hughes'
 Chalk drawing of the head of a girl by William Strang, 1904
 Drawing of the head of a woman by Thomas Southall
 2 landscapes by Morland
 2 paintings by Breughel
 2 Venetian views, school of Canaletto
 'Portrait of a horse' by Stubbs
 'French Peasants' by Le Nain

First floor

Staircase Landing

Organ designed by Philip Webb and decorated by Kate Faulkner and Burne-Jones. Burne-Jones's account book with Morris & Co. for 1870 records: 'A picture in oil of a man playing at an organ, for Howard, this is set into the organ at his house.'. This entry implies that only additional decoration, likely to have been in gesso, can be attributed to Kate Faulkner. The following pictures hung on the landing:

Northern Pastoral by Walter James
The Prawn Catchers by J.C. Hook
 'Pair of landscapes, Early English School'

Drawing room

The drawing room ceiling was painted in yellow and white to a Morris design. The room contained ebonised and gilded armchairs, shield-backed chairs and a daybed in the French Empire style, all of which were upholstered in blue Chinese damask when the walls were lined with African Marigold chintz. This scheme took shape in 1881, so as to create an appropriate colour scheme for Burne-Jones's *Dies Domini*, purchased that year for £450. Blue Chinese damask was also used for the curtains in the room, which later on also contained furniture purchased from one of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition

Society exhibitions. Part of Howard's collection of ceramics was prominently displayed in cabinets standing on either side of the curtained opening that led through to the boudoir.

As well as *Dies Domini*, the drawing room also contained the following pictures:

St George by Burne-Jones

Portrait of Georgiana Burne-Jones by Edward Poynter, commissioned in 1868 by Rosalind Howard, which hung in the niche of the window arch

Cupid & Psyche by Legros, 1867 (purchased by Howard for £40)

Pinewood outside Pisa by Giovanni Costa, 1865

Boudoir / sitting room

The 1879/80 scheme: Rosalind Howard's account for 1880 book records the purchase of 54 yards of red Honeysuckle for the boudoir. After a change of heart this was substituted by Red Iris chintz for the lining of the walls. The woodwork was repainted in a shade of green-blue. The seat furniture (3 ebonised chairs, 1 mahogany chair, 2 stools and an 'Amphill' wicker chair with upholstered seat and shoulder cushion) was upholstered in red Honeysuckle chintz, to be re-covered at a later date in red Rose and Thistle. The other furniture in the room was a heterogeneous mixture of old, new, British and Far Eastern pieces, some clearly chosen for their sentimental associations rather than for conformity to the room's original scheme. This included:

3 Japanese cabinets

1 round 'cottage' table with 'one turned leg on three claws'

1 'old English' square mahogany table with '4 bowed legs, cross bars, club feet'

1 bureau-bookcase

1 'old English' mahogany pier mirror, hung above the fireplace

In summertime a 'shot red & gold & green' Indian silk curtain was hung in front of the empty firegrate.

For a relatively small space, the boudoir contained a surprising number of pictures, although many of them were small in scale. It was here that many of the Howards' works by Burne-Jones's were hung:

The Annunciation by Burne-Jones, 1879

Watercolour sketches for the Cupid and Psyche frieze by Burne-Jones, 1872

Fatima by Burne-Jones, 1862 (purchased from Holloway in 1872, £50-0-0)

Watercolour study for *The Merciful Knight* by Burne-Jones, 1863

Chalk study of Venus and attendants for *The Toilet of Venus* by Burne-Jones, 1866 [given by the artist to Howard in 1866]

'chalk study of woman at a well', a study for *St Dorothy* by Burne-Jones

'chalk head of a woman' by Burne-Jones

3 watercolours by Walter Crane (probably either *Hunting Morn* purchased by Howard

in 1867 from Prince's gallery in Wigmore Street or *The Lovers* purchased in 1871, and the study of Shelley's and Keats' graves commissioned by Howard in 1872 and 1873 respectively)

Head of a man, chalk, by Legros, 1869

'Sketch of beggars' by Teniers

Interior of a Church by Neefs

Pair small grisaille sketches, 'Vandyck school'

Copy of Holbein's portrait of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and his wife by George Howard, 1868

Mary Howard's room

In 1879 thirty yards of Red Iris chintz were purchased for Howard's eldest daughter's bedroom, presumably for lining the walls. The seat furniture in the room was upholstered in red Snakehead. The room was redecorated in 1888 with Daisy pattern wallpaper.

Rosalind Howard's room

In 1879 Rosalind Howard's room was hung with yellow Iris chintz, with the seat furniture being upholstered to match.

Second floor

The nursery, night nursery, governess's room and two spare bedrooms were all decorated and periodically redecorated in Morris papers, with the exception of the nursery which was at one time hung with a wallpaper designed by Walter Crane.

Third floor

Howard's third floor studio had Pomegranate chintz curtains and seat furniture upholstered in red Rose and Thistle.

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